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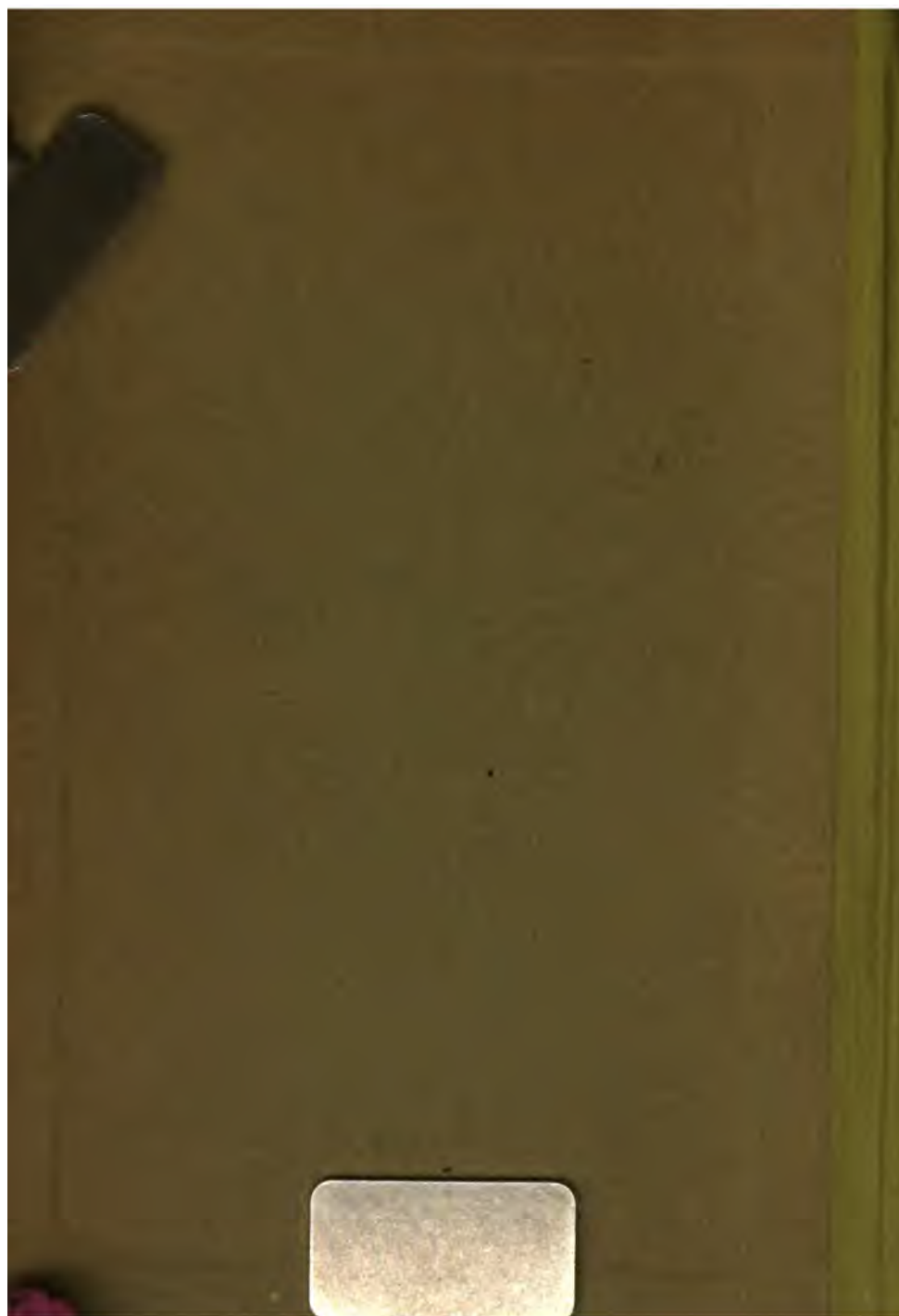


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# SICILY

## THE GARDEN OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

THE HISTORY, PEOPLE, INSTITUTIONS, AND  
GEOGRAPHY OF THE ISLAND

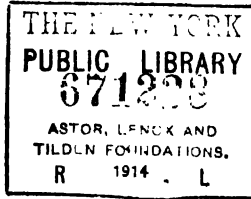
BY  
WILL S. MONROE

AUTHOR OF "TURKEY AND THE TURKS," "IN VIKING  
LAND," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED



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## FOREWORD

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THE present volume is the result of a tour through Sicily during the past winter (1908-1909) and rather extended study of the history and the literature of the island. The aim of the author has been (1) to interest the general reader of travel and description, (2) to inform prospective tourists to the Garden of the Mediterranean, and (3) to refresh the memories of those who may have already made the tour. With these three classes of readers in mind, it has been necessary to cover a rather wide range of subjects of more or less popular interest.

As in his other books of travel, the author has placed special emphasis on the distinctly human side of the subject; and, while not neglecting the geography of the island and its diverse physical features, it has been, after all, the Sicilians themselves — their manners, customs, habits and institutions — that have received the lion's share of the book.

The opening chapter gives the dominant geographic features of the island — its mountain ranges, chains, and peaks; the small islands that surround Sicily and are structurally related to it; the rivers, lakes, and fiumare; the temperature, rainfall, and sirocco; the flora and fauna, and the distribution of population.

The second chapter discusses briefly the aborigines of the island — the Sicans, Sikels, and Elymians; the third, fourth, and fifth chapters narrate the influence of the successive foreign nations and races that controlled the island for more than three thousand years — Phœnicians, Greeks, Carthagenians, Romans, Saracens, Normans, French, and Spanish Bourbons — and the character of the civilization which each brought to Sicily and developed there.

The story of the liberation of Sicily from the oppressive rule of the Bourbons by Garibaldi and his picturesque band of "a thousand men in red shirts" is told in the sixth chapter. The hard conditions which prevailed under a government that loved darkness and the substantial progress that has been made since the island united with the kingdom of Italy are related in this chapter.

The seventh and eighth chapters treat of the

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people of Sicily — their ethnic characteristics, moral traits, and social conditions. Since a lie travels so much faster than the truth, and so many American and English authors have found so many unkind things to say about the Sicilians, a conscious effort has been made to avoid this pitfall.

One may condemn the iniquitous governments that have produced prevailing conditions of ignorance, superstition, and crime, but it is not fair to nurse national superiority, to indulge in contemptuous impatience, and to set up standards of living which the political conditions that have prevailed in Sicily for several thousand years have not made possible of attainment.

Hostelries, brigandage, and the Mafia are discussed in the ninth chapter; religion and saints in the tenth; education in the eleventh, and agriculture, industry, and commerce in the twelfth. Here, as in the previous chapters, the author has endeavoured to present, with as much vividness as the nature of the subjects permitted, the dominant human interests and activities of the people.

Two chapters are devoted to the creative arts — literature, music, painting, sculpture, and

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architecture. In spite of widespread ignorance and low standards of living, the position of Sicily in the fine arts is not a mean one. There is apparently plenty of talent on the island; and, with improved social and industrial conditions, we may hope for an enlargement of the bow of artistic promise.

With a chapter on Mount *Ætna*, the volcano that dominates the island, the balance of the book is given to accounts of the leading cities of Sicily and their chief monuments. Palermo, Messina, Taormina, Catania, Syracuse, and Girgenti are given special treatment; and a dozen other places, that played important rôles in the history of the past, are brought together in a closing chapter on "The Dead Cities of Sicily."

The author was on the island at the time of the recent earthquake disaster at Messina, and he has given as much space as the limits of his book would warrant to the causes and consequences of that unparalleled calamity.

At the end of the volume will be found some suggestions for prospective tourists to Sicily and a select annotated bibliography. For the use of these books the author is under a large measure of obligation to Mr. John Cotton Dana

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and his colleagues in the Public Library at Newark, New Jersey.

And to the many kind people of Sicily who so willingly aided in the collection and verification of the data in this volume, as well as to those who furnished illustrations for the book, he can only give a blanket expression of profound thanks.

WILL S. MONROE.

**MONTCLAIR, NEW JERSEY, the 24th of May, 1909.**



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# SICILY

## THE GARDEN OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

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### CHAPTER I

#### THE GEOGRAPHY OF SICILY

Early connection of Sicily with the mainland of Europe and Africa — Area and shape of the island — The Straits of Messina — Scylla and Charybdis — The Aegatian group of islands — The Lipari islands and Stromboli — Pantelleria — Submarine volcano — Naphtha lakes — Topography of Sicily — Peloritian and Nebrobian ranges — Lesser mountain chains — Isolated peaks — Rivers and *fiumare* — Climate of Sicily — Temperature — Rainfall — The sirocco — Flora — Wild flowers, shrubs, and trees — Fauna — Population of Sicily — Their distribution — Growth of population — Chief cities — Provinces.

SICILY, the largest island of the Mediterranean, occupies that narrow part of the central sea which divides it into two basins. The broad channel separating the island from Africa has an average depth of less than a hundred fathoms, while the narrow Straits of Messina, separating it from the mainland of Europe, have an average depth of about one

hundred and fifty fathoms. It was separated from the peninsula during the Tertiary period by a rupture at the straits; and, before the diluvial period, the southern plain of the island was connected with the continent of Africa by a low tableland. Quantities of the bones of elephants and other African mammals are still found in the caves of Sicily. So that the ancient writers were geologically correct when they called Sicily the bridge between Europe and Africa.

Enclosing an area of a little more than nine thousand eight hundred square miles, the island is triangular in shape, hence the ancient name Trinacria, which has been identified with the three-cornered island described by Homer in the *Odyssey*. At the three angles of the island are the world-famous promontories — Capo di Faro, the eastern point of the Sicilian mountain range and doubtless the continuation of the Apennines in Italy; Capo Bœo, the Lilybæum of the ancients, at the north-western angle of the island, and Capo Passaro at the south-eastern corner. The Capo di Faro, the ancient Pelorus, is at the entrance of the Straits of Messina and the narrowest point of the fissure that separates the island

## **The Garden of the Mediterranean 3**

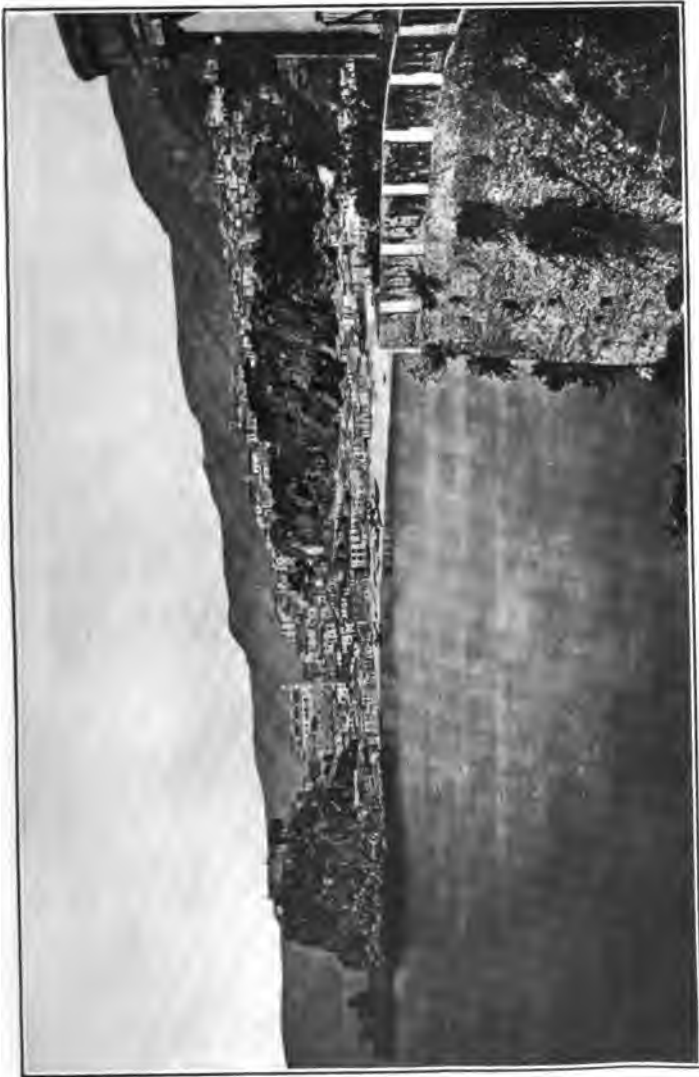
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from Italy. Here once stood a great temple to Neptune, the columns of which were subsequently used in the construction of the cathedral at Messina.

The Straits of Messina are about twenty miles long and vary from two to twelve miles in width. They are narrowest between the Scylla and Charybdis of ancient mythology and later proverb. Scylla, on the Calabrian side of the straits, is a lofty gneiss rock, the site of a city of the same name and the ancient habitat of the monster who was the implacable foe of all passing mariners. Homer gives this account of Scylla: "The rock is smooth and sheer, as it were polished, and in the midst of the cliff is a dim cave turned to Erebus, toward the place of darkness, whereby ye shall steer your hollow ship, noble Odysseus. Not with an arrow from a bow might a man in his strength reach from his hollow ship into that deep cavern; and therein dwelleth Scylla yelping horribly. Her voice indeed is no greater than the voice of a new-born whelp, but a dreadful monster is she, nor would any look on her gladly, not if it were a god that met her. Verily she hath twelve feet dangling down, and six necks exceeding long; and on

each a hideous head, and therein three rows of teeth set thick and close, full of black death. Up to her middle she is sunk far down in the hollow cave, but forth she holds her head from the dreadful gulf, and there she fishes, swooping round the rock, for dolphins or sea-dogs, or whatso greater beast she may anywhere take."

In front of the harbour of Messina, and on the Sicilian side of the straits, is Charybdis, at the base of which is the famous whirlpool, "the other cliff, lying lower, hard by the first." Homer adds: "Thou couldst send an arrow across. And thereon is a great fig tree growing, in fullest leaf, and beneath it mighty Charybdis sucks down black water, for thrice a day she spurts it forth, and thrice a day she sucks it down in terrible wise." The currents and eddies of the straits at this point are due to the fact that the speed of the tide varies from three to eleven miles an hour, the variation being due to a subterranean ledge across the straits from four to six hundred feet below the surface, thus causing the rapids, races, and whirlpools. With a spring tide and a south-east wind small vessels are still frequently driven on the Calabrian coast.



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Sicily is surrounded by a number of unimportant islands of volcanic formation. On the western coast is the small Ægatian group, including Maritimo, crowned by Monte Falcone, with an altitude of 2,245 feet, and Favignana and Levanzo, each with peaks of a thousand feet. It was on these islands that the Romans won their decisive victory over the Carthaginians in the First Punic War, and here are located the chief tunny-fisheries of Sicily. On the northern coast is the Lipari group, composed of seven small islands and a number of inconsequential islets. They are of volcanic origin and are the connecting link between Ætna and Vesuvius. Stromboli, the most constantly active of all volcanoes, is in this group. Its cone rises 3,040 feet above the level of the sea and it ejects at regular intervals of a few minutes clouds of steam which are illuminated by reflection from the glowing lava in the mouth of the volcano. In spite of the frequent streams of lava and showers of ashes, this small island of less than fifty square miles has a population of nearly three thousand. This island was regarded by the ancients as the seat of Æolus, the god of the winds. The Lipari islands yield large quantities of pumice stone.



To the north-west of Sicily is Ustica, an ancient settlement of the Phœnicians. It is a rocky island of a little more than three square miles and serves the purpose of a penal colony. It has a population of two thousand and is frequently visited by severe earthquakes.

Southwest of Sicily is Pantelleria, also used as a penal settlement. It is of volcanic origin and in the centre of the island is an extinct crater which rises at an elevation of two thousand feet. There are many hot mineral springs here, but there is a great scarcity of fresh water on the island. The island has been inhabited since the earliest antiquity and its neolithic settlers constructed huge ramparts and tomb-chambers with massive blocks of lava. It was colonized at an early date by the Phœnicians, was captured by the Romans in 277 B. C., and taken by the Arabs in 700 A. D. Three times during the past century a small island rose above the surface of the sea south of Girgenti, but the strong waves of the ocean soon washed away the ashes and cinders that formed the visible cone of what is doubtless a submarine volcano. Underground Sicily is, indeed, in a state of constant chemical effervescence. Near Argona-Caldere is a hill formed

of limestone and clay, the upper slopes of which are covered with cones which send forth quantities of mud and carburetted hydrogen gas. There is also a naphtha lake near Palagonia which emits quantities of carbonic acid gas which is fatal to birds that fly too near its surface. The ancients, who did not understand the phenomena, regarded the lake as sacred and erected a temple on its banks; and here fugitive slaves were guaranteed protection from their masters. Lake Pergusa, near the summit of Castrogiovanni, the ancient Enna, also emits poisonous gases; and other mineral springs on the island discharge carbonic acid and other gases. Doubtless the vast deposits of sulphur, the chief mineral wealth of Sicily, had their origin in subterranean lakes of lava, quantities of sulphate of lime having been carried to the surface by hot springs during the Miocene period.

As already pointed out, Sicily is properly a part of the Apennine system which was separated from the parent range by a subsidence during the Pliocene period. The island is everywhere mountainous, although distinct and continuous ranges occur only in the northern and eastern portions. The northern ranges

follow in the main the coast; they consist of primitive rocks and beds of limestone; they form numerous steep promontories of the most varied profile, and culminate in such picturesque features as the enormous quadrangular limestone block at Cefalù, the undulating hills at Termini, and the huge natural fortress of Monte Pellegrino at Palermo. There are two reasonably well defined ranges — the Peloritan mountains, a steep and narrow crystalline range, with a north-east trend from Mount *Ætna*, and not exceeding four thousand feet at the highest points, and the Nebrobian mountains, with an east and west trend and attaining elevations in the central portions of more than six thousand feet. The northern range terminates in the west in an isolated peak, Monte San Giuliano, with an elevation of 2,465 feet. The northern coast is irregular and abounds in cliffs and good harbours, and its scenery is the most beautiful to be found in the Mediterranean.

Lesser chains branch from the main ridges toward the south, diminishing in altitude as they approach the Ionian and the Sicilian seas. The chief rivers of Sicily — the Platani, the Salso, and the Simeto — take their rise on the

slopes of these transverse ranges. Between their ridges are the few lakes and the numerous swamps of the island. Lago di Lentini, near the eastern coast, is the most considerable inland body of water in Sicily. It covers ten to fourteen square miles, according to the season; and, like the other Sicilian lakes, it exhales poisonous gases. Reference has already been made to the Lake of the Palici, near Palagonia, the spot where Ducetius, the Sikel chieftain, formed his national league against the Greeks, and to Lake Pergusa, once surrounded by flowery meadows in which Pluto seized Persephone and carried her off to the underworld. In the south there are many marshy tracts, the remains of ancient bays, which are now capital malaria breeders; but the southern coast is in the main monotonous and without good natural harbours.

Belonging to no particular range, but rising from the main plateau of the island, are many isolated mountain peaks. The most important of these is *Ætna*, the Mount of Mounts, reaching an altitude of 10,758 feet, an account of which is reserved for a later chapter of this work; but one is never out of sight of a mountain of considerable height. The few interior

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towns of Sicily — Castrogiovanni, Caltanissetta, Calascibetta, and Polizzi — are located on the summits of peaks that rise from the plateau. The mean elevation of the island is more than five hundred feet; and, while during the Phœnician and Greek periods most of the historic events of Sicily were associated with towns located on the coast, during the Roman, Saracen, and Norman periods the inland mountain towns rivalled, if they did not surpass, the towns on the coast.

The rivers of Sicily, beyond their historic interest, are inconsequential. The Simeto is the principal stream of the island. It takes its rise near Maniace on Mount Ætna and reaches the sea between Lintini and Bicocca. At several points on its course, as at Paterno and Centuripe, it develops into valleys of considerable beauty. The Platani and Saso take their rise in the secondary ranges and drain toward the south. The Anapo, the home of the famous papyrus groves, is the only Sicilian river with sufficient water throughout the year to be navigated with a small row-boat. Most of the rivers of Sicily dry up during the summer, leaving arid and stony channels called *fumare*. During the greater part of the year the *fumare*

are wide, stony, and empty river beds, similar to the *arroyo seco* of California; but during the winter months they are often fierce and dangerous torrents, and they are the chief annoyance to travel at this season; for on many of the lines of carriage roads it is impossible to bridge them because of their immense width; and, even when bridged for highroads and railways, the bridges are frequently washed away by the mass of stones and débris carried down by the swollen streams.

Barring strong winds, Sicily has the finest climate of Europe. The summer heat rarely exceeds 80° Fahrenheit, and the thermometer on the lower portions of the island does not go much below 50° during January. At Palermo the mean July temperature is 77° and the mean January temperature 52°. At both Catania and Syracuse the winter temperature is even higher and more equable. The fact that the Mediterranean has a mean temperature of 55° enables the central sea to act upon the shores of the island as a heating apparatus. Snow falls on Mount *Ætna* and the other high peaks and sometimes lingers as late as June and July, but the winter atmosphere is mild, and the sun shines more than three hundred days

of the year. The rainfall of Sicily is moderate (about thirty inches a year) and occurs only during the winter months.

The sirocco is the climatic pest of Sicily, for Æolus is as active to-day as when the gods ruled supreme on the island. The sirocco is a dry hot wind that blows steadily from the south at certain seasons of the year. The damp moisture pervades the skin, the muscles weaken, and the mental energies become impaired during its duration. The atmosphere is hazy and is permeated with immense quantities of red dust. The sirocco is most frequent during the months of April, May, and September, although no month of the year is absolutely free from its scourge, but its duration is rarely more than three or four days.

Everywhere on the island the soil is fertile and at many places the rich loam is more than twenty feet deep, giving Sicily a wealth of floral life. According to Pojero<sup>1</sup> there are one hundred and thirty-eight species of wild flowers that are endemic to Sicily; ninety-three species that have been introduced from Calabria and the mainland of Italy; forty-three spe-

<sup>1</sup> Lojacano Pojero: *Flora Sicula*. Palermo, 1889.

## **The Garden of the Mediterranean 13**

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cies that have been brought from Greece and the Orient; sixty-one species from Sardinia and Spain, and ten species from Africa, thus indicating how profoundly the flora of the island has been influenced by the successive races that have conquered and held it.

Many of the wild flowers are such as one finds in Europe and America, but many more belong to species only met with in Greece and the East. But most of the flowers of the temperate and sub-tropical zones are found on the island. The asphodels of the Greek poets; the acanthus which played such an important rôle in the capitals of the Corinthian and composite borders of architecture; the scarlet adonis whose blood the lover of Venus was fabled to have stained; the handsome cup-shaped narcissus which with us is a cultivated plant; the beautiful scarlet anemone which recalls the pleasures of travel in Greece; the wild asparagus, the camphor plant, the grape-hyacinths, the wild geraniums and gladiolus — these, and many more floral species that might be named, grow abundantly on the island.

Sicily likewise has a wealth of interesting shrubs. The prickly pear, or Indian fig, grows everywhere — in the marshes, on the clefts of



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lava-rocks, and among sand-dunes — and its leaves offer a perpetual manna for the goats and its fruit for the poor peasants. Its leaves, like the camels of the desert, absorb large quantities of water and then live a long while without requiring any more. The fruit, about the size of a hen's egg, is wrapped in a green pulp and is protected by little bunches of prickles. The papyrus which has vanished from the Nile still flourishes in the Anapo. Oleanders grow wild along the beds of brooks and ravines. Carob trees, with their long succulent pods of St. John's bread; agaves, with their gigantic flower stems; the tall dark cypress; the date and dwarf palm; the luxuriant orchards of oranges, lemons, figs, olives, and pomegranates, and the groves of hazel, chestnut, almonds, and pistacios add to the floral pleasures of Sicily. There are, however, few wild trees, less than four per cent. of Sicily, including mountains, being forested, and the interior of the island is largely a treeless plateau.

In the matter of fauna Sicily is singularly poor. Butterflies, beetles, and grasshoppers are plentiful, but mammals are few and birds, to except nightingales, larks and swallows, are rare. There are still a few quails on the is-



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lands, and some game birds tarry for a brief period in migration; but it would require the seven league boots of tradition to get a decent bag in a day's hunt in Sicily. The seas surrounding the island are rich in a limited variety of fish—the huge tunny, the swordfish, the octopus, the green garfish, and anchovies. Goats are abundant. They spend their days in browsing on the cliffs, eating the leaves of the prickly pear, and their nights in the family sleeping room as a dog or cat might do. Their milk is their chief asset, although I often saw them near large cities braced against huge billboards eating the gaudy posters. This clearly is a new function for the genus *Capra*, and the Sicilian variety is to be commended to those philanthropic Americans who are interested in the abolition of ugly posters from our landscapes. There are some cows in Sicily and they wear wonderfully painted wooden collars, depicting mythological characters or events in the lives of the saints. They are paraded through the streets of the cities, the calves often running at their side, to be milked in the presence of the purchasers of the lactic beverage. Camels have vanished from the island, but there are a few horses, some oxen, many

mules, and a countless number of donkeys. And the domesticated hog is even more numerous than the donkey.

The procreative power of the Sicilians is great; and, for the size of the island, the population is very large, 3,600,000 inhabitants, according to the most recent census. Fazelli states that a woman at Girgenti in his time brought forth seventy-three children at thirty births, a fact over which a grain of Attic salt may be sprinkled at the discretion of the reader. Nevertheless, it must be recalled that a third of a million more cradles than coffins are filled every year in Sicily.

The inhabitants are not equably distributed over the island. They live for the most part in cities and towns on the coast. There are few villages in Sicily, and the isolated farmstead practically does not exist. In the districts about Palermo there are 2,500 people to the square mile; on the slopes of Mount *Ætna*, where the risks of life and property are great, there are 900; whereas, in the interior of the island there are only 250 to the square mile and on the south coast only 190. This uneven distribution of population, as will be shown in a subsequent chapter, is an important

contributing factor in the unfavourable economic conditions which prevail in Sicily.

There was a period, however, when Sicily was much more populous than the present time. If Diodorus is to be credited, during the Greek supremacy Syracuse and Girgenti (then called Akragas) each had more than eight hundred thousand inhabitants. There were, unfortunately, no trustworthy enumerations of the population of the island before the sixteenth century. In 1548 there were 1,010,000 inhabitants in Sicily; in 1637, there were 1,298,000; in 1798 there were 1,916,000; in 1861, just after the Bourbons were driven from the island, the population was 2,392,000; and, as above pointed out, according to the census of 1901, the population was 3,600,000. Thus, during recent times the island has grown rapidly in population, in spite of the enormous loss through the emigration of Sicilians to North and South America.

Palermo, with about 350,000 inhabitants, is the largest city of the island; the recently destroyed city of Messina had about 160,000 inhabitants, including faubourgs, before the last earthquake; Catania has 150,000; Modica, 50,000; Trapani, 48,000; Alcamo, 42,000;

Marsala, 41,000; Caltagrione, 39,000; Caltanissetta, 37,000; Termini, 27,000; Syracuse and Sciacca each, 26,000; and Girgenti and Ragusa each, 25,000. Vittoria, Aci Reale, Piazza Armeria, Castelvetro, Partinico, Aderno, Barcellona, Castrogiovanni, Giarre, and Noto each have more than twenty thousand inhabitants; and there are thirteen towns on the island that have between fifteen and twenty thousand inhabitants, and a much larger number with from ten to fifteen thousand inhabitants. It is thus apparent that, although an agricultural country, the inhabitants of Sicily are more generally concentrated in cities and towns than in the manufacturing countries of Europe.

For administrative purposes the island is divided into seven provinces: Trapani in the west angle of the island; Palermo and Messina in the north; Catania and Syracuse in the east, and Girgenti and Caltanissetta in the south, with the cities of the same names as provincial capitals.



**EASTERN COAST OF SICILY.**



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## CHAPTER II

### SIKANS, SIKELS, AND ELYMIANS

The island historically very old—The mythological period—Sikans the first known inhabitants—A pre-Aryan race—The Sikels—Their origin—Connection with the Greeks—Common religion—Attempts to oust the Greeks—Sikel cities—Castrogiovanni—Persephone and Pluto—The present Enna—The Elymians—Their ultimate absorption by the Phoenicians.

WHILE Sicily is geologically young, historically it is very old. Indeed its earliest history deals with the mythological age and the period when gods and demigods made history and had their habitat on the island. Kronos, with his scythe, was the first of the celestial family to take up his abode in Trinacria. He ruled during the period known as the Golden Age and was succeeded by Zeus who shared his rule with the other gods. He gave the northern coast to Athena, who made Himera, in the region of the warm and healing springs, her abode; the small island of Ortygia, the present city of Syracuse, he gave to Artemis, and created for her the renowned fountain of Ar-

ethusa, and to Demeter he gave the rocky summit of Enna, the present Castrogiovanni, and planted its slopes and summit with lovely flowers.

Then came Hercules, who had already been established with his oxen in Calabria, but when one of them jumped into the sea and swam the Straits of Messina to the island, like a dutiful guardian of the bovines from Geryon, he pursued the beast. When he reached the shores of Sicily the king of the island had already placed the ox among his own herd. He challenged Hercules to a personal combat; but the ex-herd won, and with his beast he made a tour of the island. At Leontini he encountered a large army of Sikans whom, single-handed, he defeated. This great victory was noised abroad with the result that the Sikanians decided to worship him as a god. "He said himself that he knew that he was an immortal, because his footsteps and those of his oxen were permanently imprinted on the solid rocks."

Dædalus, the inventor of the first air-ship, was the next to come. By nativity he was an Athenian of the royal race of the Erechtheidae, and he had learned the sculptor's art in his

youth and became a teacher of his art. But having murdered his best pupil because he had the temerity to excel his master, the Areopagus condemned him to death, and he fled to Crete, where he found favour at the court of King Minos. He planned some wonderful buildings for the king and in other ways made himself useful; but for participation in some of the intrigues of the queen, Minos imprisoned him. He escaped from prison, and "not being able to procure a ship, he made waxen wings for himself and his son Icarus, and flew over the sea. But the unfortunate youth flew too high, and his wings were melted by the sun. Dædalus just skimmed the waves, and arrived safely in Sicily, where he was kindly received by Cocalus, king of the Sikans, the earliest settlers in the island."

He practised the builder's art in Sicily. The rocky fortress at Girgenti he built as a treasure house for Cocalus; and as Aphrodite wished to enlarge her temple at Eryx, he made for her considerable additions to Monte San Giuliano. He likewise produced many wonderful statues. Pausanius gives a list of his works and says that "although they are somewhat uncouth to the eye, they have neverthe-

less a touch of the divine in them." There is a mediæval arch on the site of the ancient temple of Aphrodite at Eryx whose origin is in dispute. Some hold that it is the workmanship of Dædalus and others claim that it is the work of the Devil.

Then came Ulysses with the unwilling companions he had dragged from the Lotusland and had his famous encounter with the Cyclops. The Cyclops were savage giants with but one eye and that was placed in the middle of the forehead. They lived in the caves on the coast of Sicily and supported themselves by the breeding of cattle, "for they were uncouth giants without agriculture or civil union." Other gods came to the island to dwell — Aristæus, who taught the island-folks how to rear cattle, make butter, and the art of keeping bees; Adranos with his thousand dogs, who protected wayfarers but devoured thieves; Daphne, the inventor of pastoral poetry, and a score and more of gods and goddesses who found the Garden of the Mediterranean a goodly place in which to dwell. "Thus," Mr. Crawford remarks, "gods and heroes came and went and left their names upon the south, and some of them found their last resting place here; and



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tradition grew out of myth and history was moulded upon tradition."

The Sikans were the first inhabitants of the island who did not claim to be celestials, and the country was at first known as Sikania. Unfortunately we know very little about them. Twelve hundred years before the birth of Christ they occupied the west central portion of the island. It is generally held that they were a pre-Aryan race and ethnically related to the Basques, who still persist in Spain, and to the ancient Ligurians and Iberians. They were described as a dark people of medium stature. Few words of their language have survived, and these suggest Basque and Celtic linguistic resemblances. Even their towns are not easily located. Deniker has suggested that they probably corresponded to the present location of Palermo, Corleone, Mazzara, Sciacca, Caldare, and Girgenti. They doubtless occupied originally the eastern part of the island, but with the arrivals of the Sikels they were pushed into the interior. It seems quite likely that they were absorbed by the Sikels on the east and the Elymians on the west, and perhaps even by the Phœnicians who founded trading colonies on this part of the island.



The Sikels came to the island about twelve hundred years before the Christian era. They were an undeveloped Latin race from the mainland of Italy. They were loosely federated under local chiefs and lived in villages, chiefly on mountain tops. They undoubtedly took possession of the sites that had been occupied by the Sikans whom they drove toward the west. Their earliest cult seems to have been that of the Palici, which some writers have attempted to identify with Castor and Pollux. One of their early temples was at Mineo where they made human sacrifices and took their most solemn oaths. But their religion, after the arrival of the Greeks, lost its distinctive character and became absorbed in that of the new colonists. Mr. Freeman remarks in this connection: "As in all other lands, so in Sicily, the Greeks were ever ready to accept the deities of the land in which they settled, to worship according to the rites of the native worshippers, and at the same time to go as far as they could in bringing the foreign gods within the range of their own creed." As the Greeks were very exacting in the matter of celestial genealogy, and the Sikel gods were without paternity, they set before themselves the task of

providing a logical line of descent for the local deities.

With the establishment of a strong religious bond, which the Greek conquerors were able to establish, the Sikels soon found themselves in the position of a subject race, and driven to the interior of the island. They were recapitulating the history of the Sikans whom they had ousted from their towns some centuries before. While no match for the Greeks in matters of defensive skill, they were sufficiently developed to make a heroic stand for what they considered their rights. They recognized that they must either crush the growing power of the Dorians at Syracuse, or themselves be crushed. Accordingly, in 459 B. C., a Sikel confederacy under Ducetius was formed.

Concerning the last great attempt of the Sikels to throw off the dominion of the Greeks in their own island, Mr. Freeman says: " Many of the Sikels of the coast had been made bondmen, but their inland towns were independent, and had largely taken to Greek ways. But they were hampered and kept in the background in their own land, and the more they felt themselves the equals of the Greeks, the less would they abide any Greek superiority.

They had now a great leader among them, that Ducetius of whom we have already heard as helping against the Hieronians at Catania. He strove to unite his people and to win back for them the possession of their own island. His schemes must have been very like those of Philip of Macedon a hundred years later. He would found a state which would be politically Sikel, but which should have all the benefits of Greek culture. He would be king of Sicily, or of as great a part of it as he could, with his royal throne in one of the great Greek cities. But Philip inherited an established kingdom, which he had only to enlarge and strengthen; Ducetius had to create his Sikel state from the beginning."

The Greek cities on the slopes of Mount *Ætna* were first attacked. Next Akragas (the modern Girgenti) was besieged, and the Sikel forces were so powerful that the coöperation of the Greeks at Syracuse was solicited. Although at first successful, Ducetius was not strong enough to meet the combined forces of the Akragentines and the Syracusans; and in the second battle at Modica he was defeated. Unfortunately for the Sikels, they could not stand defeat. "There was no tradition of

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union among those he had brought together. All gradually forsook him, and the man who had striven to found the unity of his people was left alone and in danger of his life." He was taken prisoner and sent a captive to Corinth, where he made friends and learned a great deal from the arts and civilization of old Greece. He was subsequently permitted to return to Sicily and founded a new Sikel town at Cale Acte near Caronia.

Thus the Sikel power was broken and the Greeks became masters of the part of the island which the Sikels had for several hundred years possessed. The failure of the plans of Ducetius, observes Mr. Freeman, showed what was the destiny of the native races. On the northern coast of the island their towns stretched from Zankle to Himera when the Greeks first came to Sicily; and they had several towns on the eastern coast and many in the interior. Cefalù on the northern coast was one of their important centres. A few of their relics persist in the walls of this primeval Sikel town.

Castrogiovanni, the Enna of the Greeks, was long a Sikel stronghold. It is picturesquely situated on an isolated peak 2,605 feet above

the level of the sea, is surrounded on all sides by precipitous cliffs, and is approached by a well-engineered zigzag road. The summit, every inch of which is bathed in literary and historic associations, commands one of the finest views in Sicily — the vast expanse of mountains, plains and valleys, with *Ætna* in the east in full view. Ovid described the climate of *Castrogiovanni* as one perpetual spring; Cicero said that its flowers bloomed throughout the year and were the finest that he had seen; Plutarch exalted its freshness, and Aristotle, Livy, Strabo, and a long line of Greek and Latin authors wrote in glowing terms of its woods, its lakes, and its verdure. Ovid describes its lake as “tranquil, transparent, and meditative and veiled by a curtain of forests that reflected on its bosom the flowers of an eternal springtide.”

It was by the shores of this lake that *Persephone*, while gathering wild flowers, was captured by *Pluto*. Her father *Zeus*, it would seem, was acquainted with the intentions of the kidnapper, but her mother *Demeter* knew nothing about the matter until her daughter was in *Hades*. It was to appease the mother that *Zeus* sent *Hermes* to the underworld to



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bring Persephone back to Castrogiovanni; but she had already eaten the pomegranate which her captor had given her, and hence could spend only a part of each year with her mother in the upper world. While with her mother she was regarded as the virgin daughter and the helper of the goddess who presided over the fertility of the earth, but in the nether world she ruled as the dark goddess of death. In her former rôle she was emblematic of vegetable life; and, in the springtime when the seeds sprouted, she ascended to her mother. But, when the harvest had ripened and was gathered, she returned again to her subterranean kingdom. The conception of this myth as an image of immortality, it will be recalled, was the basis of the Elusinian mysteries.

But the woods and the fair fields of Castrogiovanni have vanished, together with the flowers whose powerful odours were sufficient to deprive dogs of their scent in the pursuit of their game. The spot has few visible connections with a past that comprehends the mythological period, the Sikel occupation, the fortunes of the Greek city, the treacherous conquest of Dionysius, its capture by the Carthaginians, its checkered history under the Ro-



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mans, the fierce struggle of Eunus and his fellow slaves for freedom, the storming of the town by Abbas ibn Fahdl and the Saracens, and its capture by the Normans. To-day Castrogiovanni is a dirty mediæval town of twenty-seven thousand inhabitants, with a tawdry cathedral and a dozen indifferent churches. But the splendid view of the surrounding country more than repays for the hard climb and the annoyance of beggars and a third-class hostelry.

There was a third race in Sicily at the dawn of the historical period. The Elymians occupied the extreme west angle of the island. They claimed to be of Trojan descent, but as such claims were fashionable at the time, not very much can be said concerning its probable accuracy. In their trade relations and in their religion they were brought into such close relations, at first with the Phœnicians and later with the Greeks, that they soon lost their ethnic individuality. Their principal towns were Eryx, Segesta, and Entella. Originally their religion, like that of the other primitive Sicilian races, was centred in the powers of nature and represented by gods and goddesses of the nether world who produced for men the abun-

dant and fruitful grain. In their great temple at Eryx the chief deity was allied to the Ash-toreth of the Phœnicians. The temple stood on what is now known as Monte San Giuliano, an isolated mountain 2,465 feet above the sea. Melkarth was also once worshipped here. A settlement sprung up about the temple, the remains of which may still be seen.

With the absorption of the Elymians by the Phœnicians, Eryx passed into their hands and later into the hands of their heirs and successors, the Carthagenians. It was taken from them by Pyrrhus, and the inhabitants withdrew to Trapani. During the Punic Wars it played an important rôle; but after the defeat of the Carthaginian fleet, it disappears from history. The modern name of San Giuliano is derived from a legend which relates that under King Roger it was sorely besieged by the Saracens and that St. Julien himself appeared on the walls for its protection and repulsed the enemy.

## CHAPTER III

### PHŒNICIANS AND GREEKS

**Sicily the meeting place of the nations of Europe, Asia, and Africa — Trading posts of the Phœnicians on the island — Early settlement at Motya — Colonies at Solunto and Palermo — Settlements in Sicily by the Greeks — Influence on the intellectual life of the island — City-states — Nature of the tyrants — Dionysius and his reign — Akragas and her tyrant — Siege of Syracuse by the Athenians — Wars with Carthage — Conquest of the island by the Romans.**

FOR a period of nearly three thousand years Sicily was the meeting place and the battle ground of the great nations of Europe, Asia, and Africa. It was here, as Mr. Symonds remarks, "that the Greeks measured their strength against Phœnicia, and that Carthage fought her first great duel with Rome. Here the bravery of Hellenes triumphed over barbarian force in the victories of Gelon and Timoleon. Here in the harbour of Syracuse the Athenian empire succumbed to its own intemperate ambition. Here, in the end, Rome laid her mortmain upon Greek, Phœnician, and Sikeliot alike, turning the island into a granary

and reducing its inhabitants to serfdom. When the classic age had closed, when Belisarius had vainly reconquered from the Goths for the empire of the East the fair island of Persephone and Zeus Olympius, then came the Mussulman, filling up with an interval of Oriental luxury and Arabian culture the period of utter deadness between the ancient and the modern world. To Islam succeeded the conquerors of the house of Hautville, Norman knights who had but lately left their Scandinavian shores, and settled in the northern provinces of France. The Normans flourished for a season, and were merged in the line of Suabian princes, old Barbarossa's progeny. German rulers then came to sway the corn lands of Trinacria, until the bitter hatred of the popes extinguished the house of Hohenstauffen upon the battle-field of Grandella and the scaffold at Naples. Frenchmen had the next turn — for a brief space only; since Palermo cried to the sound of her tocsin, '*Mora, Mora,*' and the tyranny of Anjou was expunged with blood. Spain, the tardy and patient power which inherited so much from the failure of more brilliant races, came at last, and tightened so firm a hold upon the island that, from the end of the thir-

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teenth to the beginning of the nineteenth century, with one brief exception, Sicily belonged to the princes of Aragon, Castile, and Bourbon."

Not to include the Sikans, Sikels, and Elymians — the first known inhabitants of the island — and the Italians who have been in possession only since 1860, fifteen different nations have in succession occupied Sicily during the past three thousand years — Phœnicians, Greeks, Carthagenians, Romans, Byzantines, Goths, Vandals, Saracens, Normans, Germans, Anjouans, Aragonese, Spanish Bourbons, French and English. And each has left its trace on the island. "The greatest powers and nations of the world have in several ages fought in Sicily and for Sicily," says Mr. Freeman. "Their Sicilian warfare determined their history elsewhere. In this way the history of Sicily is one of the longest and most unbroken histories in Europe."

We do not know with any degree of certainty how early the Phœnicians came to Sicily. It is certain that they had trading posts on the island more than a thousand years before the birth of Christ, and they may have come at a much earlier date. They were a

Semitic people driven from Canaan by the Israelites after their return from the forty years' wandering. They took up their residence on the narrow strip of land between the Lebanon mountains and the Mediterranean Sea and developed marine commerce. Tyre and Sidon became their great commercial centres, but they established factories and trading posts throughout the Mediterranean at Carthage, Utica, Barcelona, and Cadiz, and on the islands of Lesbos, Cyprus, Sardinia, and Sicily. The Sicilian cities, at a subsequent period, became subordinate to Carthage; but it is probable that there were several flourishing Phœnician cities on the island before the foundation of the great marts on the northern coast of Africa.

The Phœnicians were the greatest ship-builders, the bravest seamen, and the most expert manufacturers in their age; and they possessed a subtlety in monetary transactions for which the Semitic peoples have always been distinguished. They were the merchantmen of the then-known world. They brought wheat and ivory from the Nile valley; silks and dyes from western Asia; spices from the warm countries of the East; silver and tin from

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Spain; pottery from Melos; gold from Thrace; slaves from the Ægean islands, and wool, furs, and grain from the Bosphorus and the Black Sea. And in their vast trade relations they interchanged civilization as well as material goods; and thus, in very profound ways, influenced the parts of the world with whom they had dealings. The civilization that they spread, as Mr. Freeman has pointed out, may not have been their own; it may have come from Egypt or from the further East. Nevertheless, they were the givers and the teachers, and "they stand alone among barbarians as the one rival among the Greeks on their own ground, the one that could make the sea their own dominion, the one that could call distant cities into being, and give them forms of political life which the wisest men of Greece did not scorn to study."

The earliest Phœnician settlement in Sicily was at Motya on the island of San Pantaleo, six miles north of Marsala, where recent excavations have brought to light two of the gates of the city with their massive battlements; a rectangular enclosure, substantially built of stone, at the southern end of the island, which doubtless served as a small inland harbour



**BOLUNTO.**



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with a small channel leading to the sea, and a necropolis at the northern end of the island. It was at Motya that Dionysius with eighty thousand men and seven hundred vessels routed the Carthaginian forces under Himilco in 397 B. C. Palermo was the second Phœnician colony in Sicily, the greatest, in fact, on the island. It was likewise the stronghold of the Carthaginians, their lineal descendants, down to 254 B. C., when it was captured by the Romans. The third city was Solunto, near Palermo, on a spur of Monte Catalfano, 1,127 feet above sea-level. It has been suggested that Solunto served as an outpost fortress to command the approach to Palermo, and the name of King Hiram of Tyre, who was an admiral under King Solomon, is associated with the foundation of the place. Beyond a bit of road and a so-called Phœnician house, most of the remains at Solunto belong to the Roman period. Termini may have been the most eastern settlement on the northern coast, but there were doubtless many trading posts on the western angle of the island, which at a later date we find occupied by the Carthaginians. Likewise some of the Sikan and Elyminian communities, with whom the Phœnicians were on

friendly terms, were dominated by merchantmen from Tyre and Sidon.

To Sicily the Phœnicians brought their goods, their language, and their religion, for Baal and Ashtoreth, with their foul and bloody rites, were worshipped in Sicily as well as in Canaan. "Men at Palermo and Motya," says Freeman, "made their children pass through the fire, and whatever the temple of Eryx was at first, it became the house of Ashtoreth. The strife between the Greeks, who had at least a nobler form of heathendom, and the Phœnicians was therefore something of a crusade or holy war from the beginning, and men clearly felt that it was so. But we must remember that the Greeks had very little warfare with Phœnician settlements in Sicily as long as they were independent; the great struggle began when Carthage rose to dominion."

A very important part of the history of Greece belongs to the island of Sicily. During the golden age of the island it was more populous than the parent country; and its contributions to the refining arts of life were not inconsiderable. It had many splendid cities, two of which — Syracuse and Akragas — were quite as fine and more populous than Athens

or Corinth. Some of the Doric temples, the remains of forty of which may be seen to-day in Sicily, were as magnificent as those in the parent country. The theatres at Syracuse, Taormina, Segesta, and Catania, while greatly modified by additions during the Roman period, have no counterparts in Greece. The coins and vases that may be seen in the museums at Syracuse and Palermo are both numerous and admirable.

The intellectual life of Sicily likewise was of a distinctly elevated order. Philosophy was as generously patronized at Syracuse as at Athens. Plato made three visits to the island; Pythagoras had many Sicilian followers, and Xenophanes, the founder of the Eleatic school of philosophy, spent his closing years at Syracuse. Letters and music were also matters of abiding interest. Stesichorus, who perfected the Greek chorus, was a native of the island. Pindar, Sappho, and Æschylus enjoyed the hospitality of the Sicilians and sang the praises of the country, and the great dramatic poet is buried at Gela. Simonides, one of the most distinguished lyric poets of Greece, spent the last ten years of his life at the court of Hiero in Syracuse. Epicharmus, Sophron, Xenar-

chus, distinguished as writers of comedies, were natives of Sicily. So was Theocritus, the founder of lyric poetry.

Sicily likewise produced many able men of science, including Empedocles, the great physicist; Archimedes, the mathematician and mechanic, and Hicetas, who first taught that the sun moved and the earth remained stationary; Herodius and Acron, the physicians; Tisias and Corax, the orators; Diodorus, Antiochus, Philistus, and Timæus, the historians, and Georgias, the rhetorician, were also natives of the island. Thus in architecture, sculpture, philosophy, science, music, literature, medicine, history, and oratory Sicily offers many of the first names in the history of culture — not to mention the long list of statesmen who developed and controlled the destinies of the numerous city-states established on the island during the five hundred years that the sons of Hellas dominated Trinacria.

For a period of five hundred years the Greeks were the dominant people in Sicily. They had traded with the inhabitants of Sicily for many centuries before they made permanent settlements on the island, as is indicated by the Odyssey in the buying and selling of

slaves between the two races. The first colony was established at Naxos by Chalkidians of Euboia under Thekles in the year 735 B. C. The settlers belonged to the Ionian division of the Greek nation; and as some of them were from the island of Naxos, they named the new colony for their island home. The Sikels were driven from the spot, the town was fortified with a wall, portions of which may still be seen, and they set up an altar and statue of Apollo Archagetus which subsequently became the national shrine of all the Greeks in Sicily. Here the Sicilian Greeks made sacrifice before starting for the great festivals in the mother country. Hippocrates of Gela conquered Naxos at the beginning of the fifth century, and in 476 B. C. Hiero I of Syracuse forcibly deported its inhabitants to the town of Leontinoi. It was again re-peopled but finally destroyed by Dionysius in 403. The site of the ancient city, very near Taormina, is to-day occupied by lemon orchards.

Corinth the next year planted a colony at Syracuse, which was occupied by the Sikels and may have been a trading post of the Phœnicians. The natives became serfs to the newcomers. They tilled the soil and assisted the

Greeks in their wars of conquest. Other Greek colonies were established at Catania, Megara, Gela, Zankle (Messina), Selinus, and Akragas (Girgenti). Before the end of the century that followed the planting of the first colony at Naxos, the eastern part of the island was practically in the hands of the Greeks. So great a degree of prosperity attended the new-comers that it was not long before the cities of Sicily outstripped in wealth and population the cities of old Greece.

Most of the colonies were city-states, owing no allegiance to the mother country. Each had its own political institutions, and formed its own foreign alliances. In most cases the franchise was confined to the descendants of the original settlers; and while during the early period a form of democracy prevailed, eventually the power was seized by a local tyrant. Now a tyrant in the Sicilian sense was merely a usurper, one who set himself up as a ruler without lawful authority. He was customarily a successful general. If he succeeded, he went down in history as an emperor; if he failed he was called a tyrant. It is safe to assume that most of the Sicilian usurpers failed, since the history of the island is so

thickly punctuated with the names of tyrants. Dionysius the Elder of Syracuse and Phalaris of Akragas were among the earliest to play significant rôles as tyrants.

According to Plutarch, Dionysius might have given pointers to his Satanic majesty. Nevertheless he made Syracuse the first city in the world during his autocratic reign (403-367 B. C.). He walled the city; erected many handsome buildings; constructed the famous marble harbour; and saved Europe from a Carthaginian invasion. Freeman says of him: "He stuck at no cruelty or treachery that could serve his purpose, but he does not seem to have taken any pleasure in wanton oppression, and he strictly kept himself from the kinds of excess which overthrew many tyrants. As a ruler he established a greater power than had ever been seen before in the Greek world. He was never lord of all Sicily; but he came nearer to being such than any man had ever done before, and his power reached far beyond Sicily. Syracuse he made at once the head of a great dominion, and in itself the greatest city of Hellas and of Europe. And his reign marks an epoch in the history of the world. He was the beginner of many things which were car-



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ried out more fully by the Macedonian kings. With him begins a wider and more complicated world than that of the separate Greek commonwealths, a world more like the modern world, with political powers of various kinds side by side. And his reign marks a great advance in the military art, both in the invention of engines of war and the use of different kinds of troops in concert. He is at his best in his wars with Carthage. He is at his worst when he destroys Greek cities or peoples them with barbarian mercenaries."

Phalaris, the tyrant who governed Akragas from 570 to 554 B. C. has come down to us with a record for tyranny and cruelty even greater than that of Dionysius. We are told by Pindar that he kept a brazen bull into which men were put and roasted to death by a fire underneath the image, while their cries represented the roaring of the bull. His power was ultimately overthrown and he and his chief advisers are reputed to have been roasted in his own bull.

Perhaps the most significant event in the history of Sicily during the Greek period was the siege of Syracuse by the Athenians (415-413 B. C.). As Syracuse grew in power she saw fit

to impose burdens upon the weaker colonies. Some of them resented such overlordship and appealed to Athens for relief. The Athenians, inflamed with an unrighteous ambition of conquering the Dorian cities in Sicily and subordinating them to the parent country, sent a powerful army under Nicias to besiege Syracuse. It was the greatest fleet that had ever left Greece and included 136 ships of war, 5,100 heavy armed and 1,300 light troops. But the Athenians suffered a crushing defeat and thousands of soldiers were taken prisoner and languished through a long captivity in the latomia or stone-quarries of Syracuse. These quarries are now beautiful gardens; but for years following the Athenian invasion they were, as Mr. Symonds has so aptly said, "the Gethsemane of a nation, where nine thousand free men of the proudest city of Greece were brought by an unexampled stroke of fortune to slavery, shame and a miserable end. Here they dwindled away, worn out by wounds, disease, thirst, hunger, heat by day and cold by night, heart-sickness, and the insufferable stench of putrefying corpses. The pupils of Socrates, the admirers of Euripides, the orators of the Pnyx, the athletes of the Lyceum, lovers and com-

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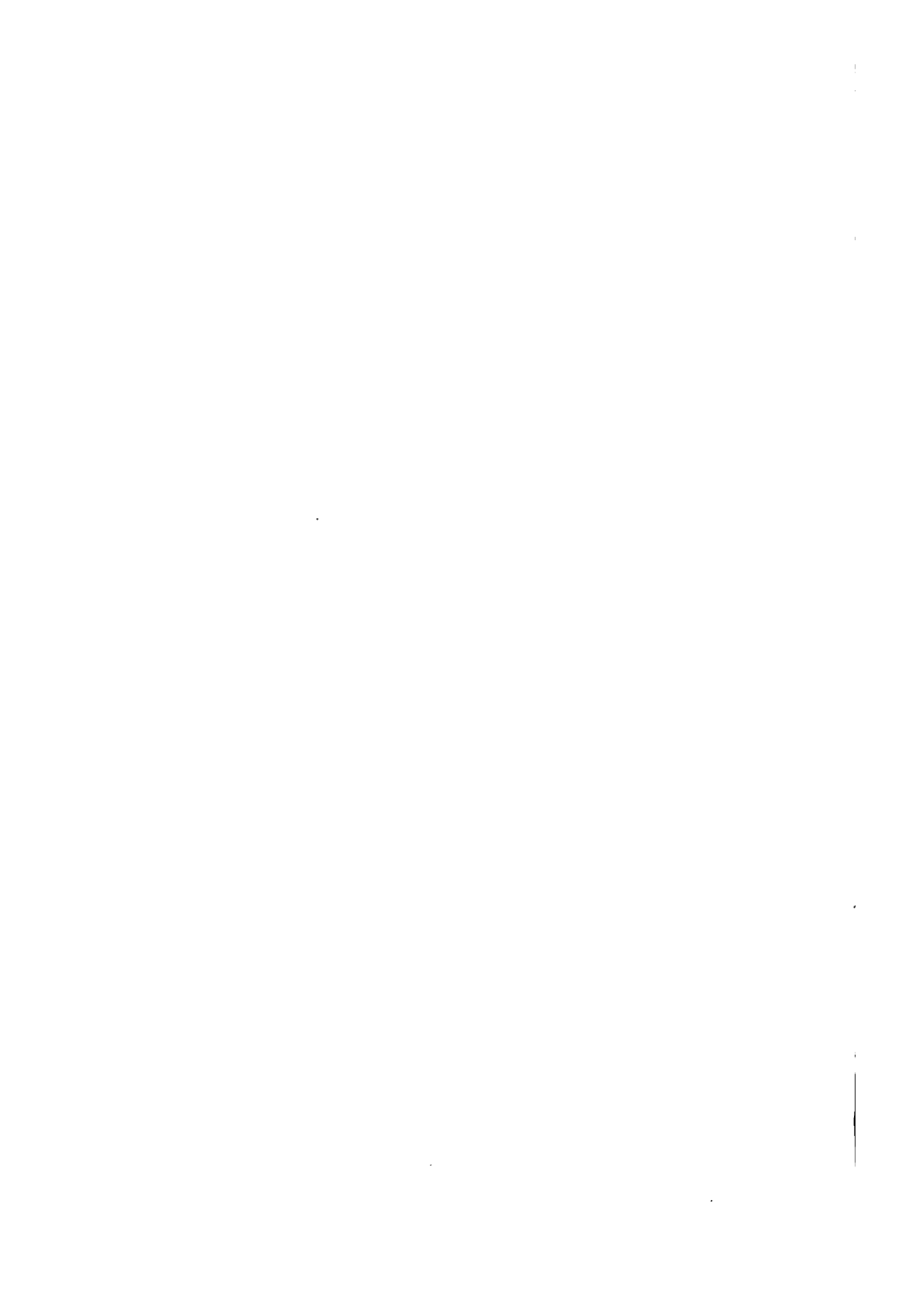
rades and philosophers, died here like dogs; and the dames of Syracuse stood dauntless on those parapets above, and looked upon them like wild beasts."

After Syracuse Akragas (Girgenti) was the most powerful Greek colony in Sicily. Her population at one period is said to have exceeded eight hundred thousand. It reached the zenith of its greatness during the reign of Theron, when the city was adorned with many beautiful buildings, Himera was annexed, and an alliance was formed with Gela. Whatever men may have thought of Theron at Himera, remarks Freeman, "he left behind him a good memory in his own city. He had greatly enlarged the town by taking in the great slope of the hill between the two rivers. He had made the walls which are still to be seen, and he had begun the great range of temples. At his death he received the honours of a hero, and was buried in a stately tomb."

But the peace of the island was continually menaced by the dissensions among the contentious city-states and by the frequent invasions of the Carthagenians. Attention has already been called to the expulsion of the invaders by Dionysius. Agathocles, a Syracusan tyrant of



TOMB OF THERON AT GIRGENTI.



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remarkable ability, was the next to roll back the tide of Carthagenian aggression. He not only drove the invaders from the island, but carried the war into Africa and for a period of three years his forces besieged Carthage. In the confusion that followed, however, the Carthagenians obtained a fresh foothold. But the Greeks were weakening so rapidly that they were no longer a match for the invader. At this juncture Pyrrhus, the king of Epirus, came as the champion of the Sicilian Greeks against the barbarians, and took Eryx and captured Palermo, which had been since its foundation continuously in the hands of the Phoenicians and Carthagenians. He did not think the Sicilians sufficiently grateful for the assistance he had rendered them, and evacuated the island. Hiero II for a time endeavoured to guide the destinies of Sicily, but his weakened city was no match for the powerful Carthagenian forces. Rome came to the rescue; and the cities which she wrested from the barbarians she made a part of the Roman provinces, and it was not long before the entire island was in the hands of the Romans.

## CHAPTER IV

### CARTHAGENIANS, ROMANS, AND SARACENS

Carthaginian heritage in Sicily—Occupation of Phœnician cities—Attempts to dislodge the Greeks—Invasion of Hannibal—The Second Punic War—Death of Hieron and the end of Greek independence—Marcellus and the coming of the Romans—Agricultural development—The rebellion of the slaves—The praetorship of Verres—His spoiliations—Results of Roman occupation—The Goths and Vandals in Sicily—Their expulsion by the emperors at Constantinople—Conquest of Sicily by the Saracens—How they governed the island—Religious tolerance—What the Saracens did for Sicily—The end of their rule.

CARTHAGE inherited the colonies in Sicily that had been founded in early times by the Phœnicians. As Tyre and Sidon waned, Carthage grew in commercial importance; and when the two eastern cities were finally conquered, first by Nebuchadnezzar and later by Alexander the Great, the commercial centre of gravity was transferred to the coast of northern Africa; and the Carthagenians became even more powerful than their forebears had been. Beginning with the middle of the ninth century, Carthage rapidly brought under her control all the Phœnician colonies that dotted the

shores and the islands of the western Mediterranean. She acquired great skill in manufactures, and her agriculture was the most scientific at the time. She exploited the mines of the islands in the central sea and her ships carried to the Orient vast quantities of industrial and agricultural products.

The ports which the Phœnicians had previously established on the western and northern coasts of Sicily were developed and strengthened and they grew in wealth and importance by the numerous enterprises which the parent city initiated. The Greeks, it will be recalled, never got much of a foothold in western Sicily; and Palermo, the northern metropolis, never came under their influence, but remained continuously a Phœnician-Carthagenian city down to the time of the occupation of the island by the Romans. Moreover, the people of Caanan got along better with the native races — the Sikans and the Elymians — than was the case with the people of Hellas.

When once well established commercially, Carthage sought political control in the countries where she traded, and this brought her in collision, first with the Greeks and later with the Romans, and in the end wrought her down-



fall. The first war with Carthage, already referred to, came at the period of the greatest prosperity of the Greek colonies. It may have been instigated by the Persians, who hated the Greeks; and wishing to attack the mother country, they induced the Carthagenians to invade the island and thus prevent the relief that might come to Greece from Sicily. The Greeks were in possession of the eastern part of the island from Himera (the present Termini) on the north coast to Akragas (the present Girgenti) on the south coast, with a chain of strongholds across the island between these two points, thus barring the Carthaginian advance to the east.

Determined to check the advance of the Greeks, Hamilcar set forth with a vast fleet from Carthage for Palermo, and from there he marched overland to Himera. Theron of Akragas and Gelon of Syracuse went to the relief of Himera. The Carthagenians were defeated; the soldiers were slaughtered and taken captives; Hamilcar was killed, and the ships were burned. The battle is said to have happened on the same day when the Greeks won their decisive victory over the Persians at Salamis. There is nothing against the



A COMPATRIOT OF HAMILCAR.

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story that they were fought on the same day, remarks Mr. Freeman, except that the tale sounds too good to be true.

The next attempt to dislodge the Greeks in Sicily came at the time of Hannibal, a grandson of Hamilcar, who had sworn to avenge the memory of his ancestor. With a force of a hundred thousand men he landed at Motya and marched against Selinus, the westernmost of the Greek colonies on the island. It was an important city and contained some of the finest buildings in Sicily. The aid of Syracuse was sought in the defence of the city, but it arrived too late. Sixteen thousand of the inhabitants were put to the sword and five thousand were taken to Africa and sold as slaves.

Then he went to Himera, the place where his grandfather had met his fate; he defeated the Greeks and destroyed the city. "He gave the spoil to his soldiers," says a historian; "the women and children were made slaves. Then all the men who were left, about three thousand, were taken to the place where Hamilcar had died. There they were insulted, tortured, and at last put to death as an offering to the ghost of Hamilcar. The walls of Himera were broken down; the temples were plundered and

burned; the city, in short, was swept away. To this day there are mighty ruins at Selinus; but the hill of Himera stands empty. So did Hannibal, with a mighty sacrifice, avenge the death of his grandfather. He had cut Hellas short by two of her cities, and went back to Carthage with all honour."

The next Punic War decided the fate of Carthage, and likewise of Sicily. The Carthaginian forces were decimated on the marshy grounds along the Anapo by malaria rather than by the Roman legions, and Marcellus won an easy victory at Syracuse. Akragas was taken by the Romans. But it required a deal of sparring before all the Carthaginian strongholds had been routed; and, what was more to the purpose, before all their Sicilian allies had been defeated and punished. The Phœnicians and Carthaginians had been on the island for a thousand years; but the altars of Baal had to leave the sites they had so long occupied, and a thousand years elapsed before a Semitic people re-conquered Sicily.

The end of Greek independence in Sicily came with the close of the second Punic War, when the power of Rome was established on the island. For a period of seven hundred

years Sicily was a Roman province and was ruled by governors sent from Rome. At first Rome merely controlled the provinces which had been taken from the Carthaginians, and friendly alliances were formed with the Sicilian Greeks. Syracuse was at the time the chief city-state of the Greeks; and, during the long lifetime of Hieron II, the Sicilian Greeks continued on friendly terms with the Romans. Hieron was famous among the other Greek kings and he "kept a strict friendship with the Egyptian Ptolemies, to which it has commonly been thought that the presence of the paper-plant of the Nile in the waters of Syracuse is owing. His bounty reached to Greeks far away; he largely helped the Rhodians when their city had suffered from an earthquake. Like the former Hieron, he had poets to sing his praises, and the pastoral poems of Theocritus, of which the scene is chiefly laid in Sicily, mark his time as the odes of Pindar mark the time of the old tyrants."

After the death of the benevolent old king of Syracuse, some of the Sicilian cities grew suspicious of the ambitions of Rome, and allied themselves with Carthage. This was clearly a political blunder; for, whatever may have been

the ultimate aims of the Romans, the Carthaginians were a decadent power, and Rome quite naturally resented the action. Marcellus was sent to Sicily to punish the disloyal cities. He soon lost the sympathy of those cities which had remained loyal to the Roman cause by his indiscriminate slaughter and bloody deeds. Syracuse was one of the last to become alienated, and Marcellus forthwith turned his attention to its conquest. After a prolonged siege it was forced to capitulate, and the ruthless Roman conqueror began "that shameless robbery of pictures, statues, and other works of art, which went on constantly from this time. He took away all that he could." The rich plunder of gods and men, which he took to Rome, excited the avarice of the ruling class; and the office of governor of Sicily was thereafter largely sought for purposes of spoliation.

It was many years, however, before the island was entirely in the hands of the Romans; for many towns, in alliance with the Carthaginians, dreaded the Roman yoke, and they stubbornly resisted the conquests of the invaders. By 201 B. C., however, the conquest was complete and Sicily became a mere appanage to

Rome. Some of the cities retained certain privileges and degrees of freedom in matters of local administration; but the sovereign power was vested in Roman proconsuls. A half dozen towns enjoyed special exemption from tribute to Rome; but Roman landlords were universal; the Sicilians had to pay to them by way of rent the tithe of the crops, and maladministration was the rule. What made matters worse was the fact that the proconsuls were subject only to the censure of the Roman senate, and Roman senators were always unwilling to condemn their chief men on the accusation of strangers.

Peace came to the island with the Romans, it is true, but peace had been purchased at the cost of freedom and political life; and, while Sicily became the granary of the Roman empire, large numbers of hitherto-free Sicilians sank to the rank of serfs. Mr. Freeman writes in this connection: "Both rich Sicilians and Romans became masters of great estates, which they tilled by gangs of slaves. The endless wars and conquests of Rome led to a vast increase of slavery and the slave trade, and the corn-growers of Sicily bought captives from all parts. In the slavery of antiquity the domes-



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tic slave, above all, the educated slave, such as many were, had a good chance at freedom, and at Rome even of citizenship. But nothing could be more hopeless than the state of the slaves who worked in the fields. They had no chance of freedom; they were cruelly treated; they were not allowed enough food and clothing; they were sometimes even mockingly told by their masters that they might supply their wants by robbing on the highway. On the one hand, the whole country was made unsafe; on the other, the wrongs of the slaves at last led them to revolt."

Many of the Sicilian slaves had been taken in the wars and others had been captured as pirates, so that they possessed more or less knowledge of the art of warfare. When, therefore, their condition became intolerable, they revolted. The first Slave War broke out in 134 B. C. at Enna, and it was followed by revolts in other parts of the island. The slaves murdered their masters, took possession of their estates, and declared Eunous, a Syrian slave, their king. He took on himself the state of a king and organized an army of six thousand slaves. For three years, in spite of the vigorous military operations of the Romans,

he controlled the interior of the island. Enna and Taormina were the chief strongholds of the rebels; both, however, were ultimately betrayed, the slaves were defeated, and the army of Eunous evaporated.

Momentarily their condition was improved a bit; but a little more than a quarter of a century later (102-99 B. C.) a second Slave War broke out. For a season the slaves were successful against the Roman forces, but the revolt was finally put down and many of the rebellious slaves were taken to Rome "to fight with wild beasts, but they escaped this fate by slaying one another."

After the Slave Wars, the most significant event in the history of Sicily during the Roman period is the praetorship of Verres (73-70 B. C.) which Cicero has immortalized in his orations. The system of farming the tithes to speculators, which the Romans had brought to Sicily, was bad; but under decent governors it was tolerable. Verres had absolutely no conception of the rights of men and no notion of respecting the privileges which Rome had granted to the Sicilian cities. He plundered right and left and practised every kind of extortion. Freeman very properly

says of him: "He committed every kind of excess; he imprisoned and slew men wrongfully. And his hands fell on others besides the provincials; for the crime on which Cicero lays most stress, as the crown of all wickedness, was one that was absolutely unheard of before, the crucifixion of a Roman citizen. There is reason to think that the extortions of Verres tended to the lasting impoverishment of the island. But the most striking thing at the time was his plunder of the choicest and most sacred works of art. He professed to be a man of taste, and in that character he robbed cities, temples, and private men. And all this while he neglected the common defence of the province, and let pirates sail freely into Sicilian havens."

It is indicative of the corrupt character of the Roman senate that the doings of Verres were condoned by many of its members and that strenuous efforts were made to discredit the charges of Cicero, who had come to the relief of the long-suffering Sicilians in the oration that has become classic. But so forceful and sweepng were the charges, that, before Cicero had ended his pleadings, Verres went into exile, a privilege of condemned Roman

officials. He was finally put to death by one of the proscriptions of Mark Antony.

Beyond the development of the wheatfields and the vineyards, the Romans did comparatively little to improve the economic conditions of Sicily. In the other provinces of the empire they spent vast sums on the construction of public highways, but they built no roads in Sicily. Some amphitheatres, theatres, and aqueducts were constructed; they ruined many of the splendid Greek temples and theatres by attempting to reconstruct them, and they despoiled the island of its countless treasures of Greek art. And the intellectual life of Sicily, during the seven hundred years that it recognized the supremacy of Rome, was practically nil.

Sicily suffered greatly during the period of dismemberment of the old Roman empire and the long struggle of the later empire with the papacy. After the time of Marcus Aurelius disorder was the rule and the provinces were rent with sedition and revolt. Matters were a bit better after Constantine made Constantinople the seat of the empire; but it made easier those barbarian invasions which distracted old Rome and made Sicily the scene of the numer-

ous marauding expeditions, and ultimately made the Vandals and Goths masters of the island. Until the return of the Arabs, in the great Saracenic invasion of the ninth century, Sicilian history is one vast waste. In spite of the early introduction of Christianity and the multitudes of monks and priests on the island, for a period of a thousand years there is scarcely a name that deserves mention. While monasticism had done much toward the intellectual development of the half-civilized people of northern Europe, it seems to have done practically nothing in Sicily to prevent the decadence which had begun with the conquest of the island by the Romans.

For nearly a hundred years (440-535) Sicily was in the hands of the Vandals. They were, however, the only people who have held the island of whom no trace can be found to-day. Having captured Carthage and established a Teutonic kingdom in Africa, Genseric soon became the first naval power in the Mediterranean. He conquered Sardinia, Corsica, and the Balearic islands; sacked Rome, and in 440 invaded Sicily. Palermo was besieged and Lilybæum (Marsala) conquered. In 477 he transferred Sicily to Odoacer upon promise of trib-

ute. While ruled by Vandal chiefs, there was nominal recognition of the superior authority of the emperors at Constantinople. In 493 the Vandals were succeeded by the Goths. But during the reign of Justinian the barbarians were driven from the island. In 535 Belisarius was sent to Sicily with a strong force of Byzantine troops. Syracuse, Catania, and the other towns on the eastern coast were easily taken, but a stubborn resistance was met at Palermo. Once more (549-550) the island suffered an invasion from the Goths under Totila, but the barbarians were again expelled in 551.

Sicily again became a part of the Roman empire, or rather of Byzantium, for the political centre of gravity of Rome was now at Constantinople. Down to its capture by the Saracens (827) it was ruled by patricians sent from Constantinople. The Emperor Constantine is the only Byzantine sovereign who is known to have visited the island. He had fallen into such general disfavour by his tyranny that in 665 he took up his residence at Syracuse. But the Sicilians did not relish his oppression any better than the people of Constantinople, and three years later he was murdered. The Sicil-

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ians set up a local ruler; but Constantine the Fourth, the son of Constans, the year following overthrew the new régime and won back the island. But the hold on the island was loose; and, during the subsequent religious controversies between Rome and Constantinople, allegiance to Byzantium was often of a doubtful nature.

In the seventh and eighth centuries the Moslems, in a blaze of enthusiasm that is unparalleled in the history of conquest, swept over the countries of the eastern Mediterranean and transformed the scattered and half savage Arab tribes into nations that became the chief centres of civilization during the long period of intellectual darkness in Europe. They cultivated letters; developed agriculture; extended commerce; husbanded the resources of the countries they conquered; and devised liberal schemes of customs duties and taxes. "The fierce religious fanaticism which they had displayed on so many battle fields," remarks a historian, "did not render them insensible to luxury. Their manufacturers led the world in variety and beauty of design and workmanship and gave a great impulse to western Christian industries; in textile fabrics they



A SARACEN TYPE.



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have never been surpassed; they worked with marvellous skill in all the metals — gold, silver, copper, bronze, iron, and steel; their leather, glassware, potteries, linen paper, tinctures, essences, syrups, and dyes were much finer than those made in any other part of the world. In all these industries the Christian manufacturers learned their best lessons from the Mohammedan people.”

After the conquest of the coast of northern Africa the Saracens had often plundered the towns of Sicily, but they did not attempt the conquest of the island until the ninth century; and then, strange to say, they came at the treacherous instigation of the exiled Byzantine governor. The Emperor Michael the Stammerer had decreed that, as a penalty for having stolen a beautiful nun from her cloister, the governor should lose either his tongue or his nose; but the culprit fled to Kairwan and induced the Aglabite sovereign to invade Sicily. The island of Pantellaria and the headland of Lilybæum were taken in 827. In a great battle near Plantana the Saracens defeated the Byzantine forces, and shortly afterwards they occupied Girgenti. With reinforcements from Spain they were able to continue the conquest

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of the island. Messina was taken; and Palermo, after a stubborn resistance, was forced to capitulate. Castrogiovanni, the ancient Enna, was besieged in 836, but it required twenty-three years to capture this rocky stronghold. Syracuse, in order to preserve her commerce, purchased peace by paying a heavy ransom, but it had to accept Saracen rule in 878. This completed the conquest of the island, barring a few isolated spots which, for some reason, were allowed to continue their allegiance to Byzantium. The rapidity with which the Sicilians were absorbed by the conquerors is one of the astonishing facts in the history of the island. Gibbon states that on a single day fifteen thousand Sicilian boys were circumcised.

The emperors at Constantinople for many years made no attempt to recover the island. A hundred and fifty years after the conquest Basil II took steps to drive the Saracens out of Sicily, but he died before his expedition was ready to sail for Syracuse. Ten years later Maniaces was sent from Constantinople to accomplish this end, and he commenced the reconquest "in a manner worthy of Basil him-

self," remarks Freeman, "but the women and eunuchs who ruled at Constantinople procured his recall and affairs fell into confusion."

During the period of two hundred years, when the Saracens controlled Sicily, the Christian inhabitants of the island were divided into four classes: (1) A few independent communities who still held allegiance to Byzantium; (2) Tributaries who paid the Saracens what they would otherwise have sent to Constantinople; (3) Vassals whose towns had fallen by arms or treaty into the hands of the conquerors; (4) Serfs, prisoners of war, and slaves attached to the soil. The religion of the Christians was tolerated and their property rights respected.

The island prospered greatly during the period of Arab domination. They placed agriculture upon a scientific basis; devised excellent systems of irrigation; made extensive use of fertilizers; provided for the rotation of crops; introduced the silk worm, the mulberry, and new varieties of fruit trees; and they developed an extensive commerce in wheat, barley, oil, sugar, nuts, silk, metals, marbles, and precious stones. Likewise the fine arts — poe-

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try, music, mathematics, geography, the sciences, and architecture — flourished. The people were not unduly taxed and tolerance in religious matters, as already pointed out, was universal. But there were some restrictions which were onerous to the Christians. They were prohibited from drinking wine; they were not allowed to ride on horseback or to put saddles on their mules and donkeys; Christian houses could not be higher than those of their Saracen neighbours; they were denied the privilege of accompanying their deceased to the grave with pomp and weeping, and Christian women could not enter the public baths when Moslem women were there. And “so that they might never forget their inferiority, they had to have a mark on the doors of their houses and one on their clothes.”

But the Saracens in Sicily, as in Spain and the other western countries that they conquered, never formed a compact and solid state; internal dissensions were matters of constant occurrence; they became enervated by excessive luxuries; and, exposed as the island was to the inroads of fresh invaders, it fell an easy prey to those “brigands who on their first appearance in Italy had pillaged stables

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and farm-yards to supply their daily needs ”  
but who “ lived to mate their daughters with  
princes and to sway the politics of Europe  
with gold.”

## CHAPTER V

### NORMANS, FRENCH, AND BOURBONS

Coming of the Normans to Sicily — Services of pilgrim bands — Tancred of Hauteville and his sons — Conquests of Roger the Great Count — His tolerant rule — The reign of Roger II — His interest in learning — William I and William II — What they did for Palermo — La Cuba — Tancred and the contest with Henry IV — Frederick II and the Sicilian renaissance — The Norman tombs at Palermo — The House of Anjou and the Sicilian Vespers — Peter of Aragon and the Spanish rule — The treaty of Utrecht and the new Bourbon régime — Efforts to throw off the oppressive Bourbon yoke and the cruelties inflicted — Results of centuries of Bourbon oppression.

THE most romantic chapter in the history of Sicily is the brief Norman period (1061-1194). During the Viking Age<sup>1</sup> adventurous Norsemen had left their fjord-homes in Scandinavia for pleasures and gains, had taken forceful possession of one of the fairest provinces of France, and had adopted the language, the religion, and the customs of the French. At the time of the crusades straggling bands of Normans halted in Italy and they found it a goodly

<sup>1</sup> See the author's *In Viking Land: Norway — Its People, Its Fjords, and Its Fjelds*. Boston, L. C. Page and Company; London, George Bell and Sons. 1908.

land in which to dwell and made the fact known to their countrymen in Normandy.

One such band, composed of Drago and forty Norman companions, halted at Salerno in the year 1003. The town was besieged by a band of roving Saracens and the Norsemen volunteered to repulse the enemy. They succeeded so well that the ruling grand duke induced them to linger and enter his permanent military service. Other Norman bands were from time to time employed as stipendiaries of various petty Italian rulers, and everywhere they got a reputation for great courage and hardihood.

The Prince of Capua in 1021 engaged a band of Norman pilgrims returning from the Holy Land to attack the belligerent Benedictines at Monte Cassino. They brought the pious friars to terms and made them pay an enormous indemnity for their rebellion against their sovereign. The prince was so entirely satisfied with the outcome of the expedition that he shared the booty with them and offered them liberal terms to enter his army.

In Naples, where the ruling duke had been dispossessed, they restored him to his throne, and the leader of the band was given in mar-



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riage the daughter of the grateful duke, and the other members of the party were liberally rewarded. When the news of such experiences and rewards reached France, numerous Norman knights repaired to the south of Italy in quest of employment and adventure. Mr. Symonds says of them: "Large of limb and stout of heart, persevering under difficulties, crafty yet gifted with the semblance of sincerity, combining the piety of pilgrims with the morals of highwaymen, the sturdiness of barbarians with the plasticity of culture, eloquent in the council-chamber and the field, dear to their soldiers for their bravery and to women for their beauty, equally eminent as generals and as rulers, restrained by no scruples but such as policy suggested, restless in their energy, yet neither fickle nor rash, comprehensive in their views, but indefatigable in detail, these lions among men were made to conquer in the face of overwhelming obstacles, and to hold their conquests with a grasp of iron."

Tancred of Hauteville was a Norman gentleman of small fortune and numerous progeny and ten of his sons sought their fortunes in the south. These were Roger, who became the Great Count of Sicily, Robert Guiscard, who

united Calabria and Apulia, William the Iron Arm, who was the first count of the latter province, Humphrey and Drago, each of whom wore coronets; and five others who shared the qualities although not the fame and the kingdoms of their more fortunate brothers. The sons of Tancred came to southern Italy at a time when the distracted provinces were in anarchy, when, as Mr. Symonds has remarked, "the decaying Empire of the East was relaxing its hold upon the Apulian provinces, when the papacy was beginning to lift up its head after the ignominy of Theodora and Marozia, and the Lombard power was slowly dissolving upon its ill-established foundations."

Maniaces, the Byzantine general, engaged them in a successful expedition against the Saracens. He had promised them half the booty and half the towns that might be taken; but at the end of the campaign he had forgotten his promises; but the sons of Tancred wisely concealed their surprise and indignation. They had not long to wait. A Saracen chieftain in Sicily, deprived of his province, invited the Normans to come to his aid. But they did not leave the island this time. In the great battle at Castrogiovanni in 1061, when seven hundred

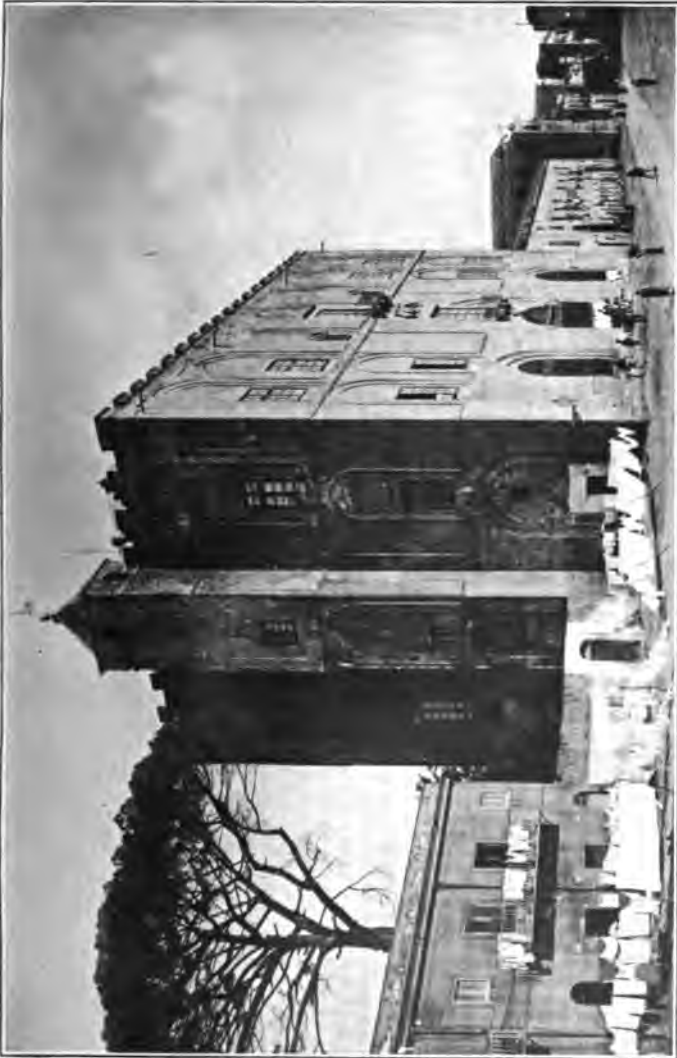
Norman knights were arrayed against fifteen thousand Saracens, they won a decisive victory. But it required many years of hard fighting to oust the Saracens from Palermo, Syracuse, Girgenti, and the other Arab strongholds. Robert, who had aided young Roger in the conquest of the island, returned to his possessions in Apulia, retaining for himself only Palermo. Robert died in 1085 and Roger became sole ruler of the island and the heir of his brother's Apulian provinces.

Roger I (1061-1101), commonly called the Great Count, found the island occupied by many different races — Greeks, Arabs, Lombards, Germans, Jews, etc., but he did not in any measure interfere with local laws, customs, languages, or religions. Each race was left in possession of its respective rights. The Greeks were governed by the Code of Justinian, the Saracens by the Koran, the Jews by the Talmud, and the Normans by the Coutoumier of Normandy. Four official languages were recognized — the Greek, the Latin, the Arabic, and the Norman French. Parliament was called together, but the government and administration of law were organized after the manner of the Saracens, for Count Roger

“ found a machinery of taxation in full working order, officers acquainted with the resources of the country, books and schedules constructed on the principles of strictest economy, a whole bureaucracy, in fact, ready to his use. By applying this machinery he became the richest potentate in Europe, at a time when the northern monarchs were dependent upon feudal aids and precarious revenues from crown lands. In the same way the Saracens bequeathed to the Normans the court system which they in turn had derived from the princes of Persia and the example of Constantinople.”

Roger II (1101-1154), the four-year-old son of the Great Count, succeeded his father, and united southern Italy and Sicily under one crown. He took Pope Innocent II captive and forced the unwilling pontiff to recognize the title of king which he had assumed, as well as his rights in Calabria, Apulia, and Capua; he built the splendid cathedral at Cefalù and the church of San Giovanni degli Ermeti at Palermo; and he caused to be constructed the interesting Saracenic-Norman château of La Favara and that gem of mediæval art, the Cappella Palatina. He was a linguist of no

mean ability, a patron of the arts, and he had keen and abiding literary interests. "Before Petrarch taught the princes of Italy to respect the pen of a poet," men of science and letters occupied commanding positions at his court. He caused the writings of Ptolemy to be translated from the Arabic into Latin; he supervised the compilation of a geography of the world; the prophecies of the Erythrean Sybil were by his direction rendered accessible; the bones of Virgil he caused to be transferred from their resting place at Posilippo to the Castel dell' Uova in Naples, that they might be more fittingly venerated; and during his leisure moments, he was surrounded at his beautiful country residence at La Favara by men of letters, poets, musicians, scientists, astrologers, and travellers. Edrisi, his court geographer, said of him: "He did more while sleeping than most men awake." And a contemporary chronicler pays him this tribute: "He was a lover of justice and a most severe avenger of crime. He abhorred lying; did everything by rule, and never promised what he did not mean to perform. He never persecuted his private enemies, and in war he endeavoured on all occasions to gain his point



**MORESQUE PALACE OF LA ZISA AT PALERMO.**

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without shedding blood. Justice and peace were universally observed throughout his dominions."

William I (1154-1166), surnamed "the Bad," was an indolent ruler who came under the influence of an avaricious and revengeful prime minister, and his reign differed in most respects from that of his benevolent father. His manners and habits, we are told, were those of an Arabian emir, without the virtues of the latter. He lived a life of luxury and vice, and his death was chiefly lamented by "the Saracen women, who rushed about the streets clothed in sackcloth, with dishevelled hair, and uttering loud cries, or funeral songs, which they accompanied with their tambourines."

The chief architectural relic of the reign of William I is the Moresque palace of La Zisa at Palermo. It is a lofty square building and originally had no windows on the outside, the windows all turning to the court within. Round the parapet is an inscription in Cufic characters which declares that "Europe is the glory of the world, Italy of Europe, Sicily of Italy, and the adjacent garden the pride of Sicily." La Zisa is the best preserved civil edifice of the Norman period.



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William II (1166-1189), who in contradistinction to his predecessor was called "the Good," came to the throne at the age of fourteen; but during his minority the affairs of the government were first in the hands of Stephen, Count of Perche, and later of Walter of the Mill, an Englishman of humble birth. He took part in the crusades and freed Antioch and Tripoli from the Moslems. An old chronicler says that "in the time of William II there was more security in the thickets of Sicily than in the kingdoms of most other countries." Instead of delegating his royal powers to unscrupulous ministers, as his father had done, "he attended himself to all the duties of his station, was respected by the barons, beloved by the people, and only feared by the wicked."

Two important buildings in the suburbs of Palermo belong to the reign of William II — the cathedral at Monreale and the château of La Cuba. In its day La Cuba was one of the finest palaces in Sicily. It was built by Saracenic architects, but, beyond a few cellular ornamentations in one of the courts, there is little in the building — now used as an artillery barrack — to suggest its Norman splendour. It

bears an inscription in Arabic: "Here halt and admire the illustrious dwelling of the most illustrious king of the earth, William II." Readers of Boccaccio will recall that it was in La Cuba that Gianni di Procida surprised his lost love. In an orange garden that was once a part of the palace is the beautiful vaulted pavilion, called La Cubola, which is generally regarded as the most perfect specimen of Saracenic architecture in Sicily. It is a small cupola supported by four arches of ashlar stone.

Tancred (1190-1194), an illegitimate son of Roger, Duke of Apulia, and a grandson of Roger II, was placed on the throne by the Saracen or national party. The opposing party had wished to crown Henry, a son of Barbarossa, who had married Constantia, the legitimate daughter of Roger II. Worn out by a bitter warfare against Henry and saddened by the grief of his oldest son, Tancred died after a short reign. He was reputed a noble-hearted and generous ruler.

The news of the death of Tancred brought Henry IV (1194-1197) and a large German army to Sicily and he entered Palermo in triumph. He promised Sibylla, the wife of Tancred, provinces in Calabria for herself and

young son William III if she would resign the crown. As there was no appeal from force, she yielded, whereupon Henry broke his promise and mutilated and put out the eyes of the young prince and sent him a prisoner to Germany. The lad died shortly afterwards, and the king did not live long to enjoy his ill-gotten gains. He died of a fever while besieging Castrogiovanni in a civil war against the Sicilian feudal nobility.

Frederick II (1197-1250), the three-year-old son of Henry, gave Sicily the most brilliant chapter in her history. He has generally been regarded as the ablest monarch during the Middle Ages. His mother, as regent, immediately ordered all the Germans to leave the island that she might allay the ill-feeling which her husband had occasioned among the Sicilians; but, dying a year later, she left Frederick under the regency of Pope Innocent III. When he reached his majority he refused to tolerate ecclesiastical interference in the administration of his kingdom. He founded the universities of Naples and Padua, extended the privileges of the Sicilian parliament, established a municipal body in each commune, took the rights of criminal jurisdiction from the

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barons, amended the code of national laws, and resisted the efforts of the popes to enlarge their worldly kingdom at the expense of Sicilian territory.

He was, as Mr. Symonds has pointed out, born out of date. In intellectual interests, he belongs to the eighteenth century and not to the time of the crusades. He not only tolerated the Mohammedan religion but he employed his Saracen subjects as troops in his warfares against the popes and the preaching friars. "The zeal for liberal studies, the luxury of life, the religious indifferentism, the bureaucratic system of state government, which marks the age of the Italian renaissance, found their first manifestation within the bosom of the Middle Ages in Frederick. When our King John was signing Magna Charta, Frederick had already lived long enough to comprehend, at least in outline, what is meant by the spirit of modern culture. It is true the so-called renaissance followed slowly and by tortuous paths upon the death of Frederick. The church obtained a complete victory over his family and succeeded in extinguishing the civilization of Sicily. Yet the fame of the emperor who transmitted questions of skeptical

philosophy to Arab sages, who conversed familiarly with men of letters, who loved splendour and understood the arts of refined living, survived both long and late in Italy. His power, his wealth, his liberality of soul and lofty aspirations, formed the theme of many a tale and poem. Dante placed him in hell among the heresiarchs; and truly the splendour of his supposed infidelity found for him a goodly following. Yet Dante dated the rise of Italian literature from the blooming period of the Sicilian court. Frederick's unorthodoxy proved no drawback to his intellectual influence. More than any other man of mediæval times, he contributed, if only as the memory of a mighty name, to the progress of civilized humanity."

Manfred (1254-1258) brought to a close the Norman rule in Sicily. Like his father he was excommunicated, but unlike his father he was not strong enough to resist the worldly claims of the popes. Urban IV excommunicated him, declared him a usurper, and offered the crown first to the king of England, who declined it, and then to Charles of Anjou, who accepted it, and at the head of a large army invaded Sicily. Manfred met his death heroically, as became a

scion of the Norman house, on the battlefield; for his barons deserted him at a critical moment in the conflict, and Charles entered Palermo at the head of a conquering army. The pope denied Frederick a Christian burial, his enemies refused him a monument, but Dante immortalized the last of the Normans in his verses.

The Norman kings are buried in the cathedral at Palermo. King Roger and his daughter Constance, Henry IV and his son Frederick II, and William the son of Frederick III. The sarcophagi are of porphyry, very simply but very beautifully executed. Mr. Symonds, from whose scholarly tribute to the Normans I have already quoted, says of these tombs: "Very sombre and stately are these porphyry resting-places of princes born of the purple, assembled here from lands so distant, from the craggy heights of Hohenstauffen, from the green orchards of Cotetin, from the dry hills of Aragon. They sleep and the centuries pass by. Rude hands break open the granite lids of their sepulchres to find tresses of yellow hair and fragments of imperial mantles embroidered with the hawks and stags the royal hunter loved. The church in which they lie

the island from the hated House of Anjou. Gibbon says of him: " His birth was noble, but his education was learned, and in the poverty of exile he was relieved by the peace of physic, which he had studied in the school of Salerno. Fortune had left him nothing to lose except his life, and to despise life is the first qualification of a rebel. The island was roused to a sense of freedom by his eloquence." The conspirators worked for two years in secret with the utmost discretion; but, before they were quite ready to make open declaration of a revolution, a popular explosion at Palermo, which was the result of an accident, terminated the rule of Charles in Sicily and avenged the blood of Manfred and Conrad.

At the time of the vigil of Easter in the year 1282, there was a great concourse of the people of Palermo assembled at the church of San Spirito for vespers. Under the pretence of searching for concealed weapons, a French officer had insulted the young wife of a Sicilian. The enraged husband shouted " Death to the French; " the infuriated crowd re-echoed his cry, and the tocsin of the church was the signal for a general massacre. No one of French birth escaped the passion of the inflamed



**SAN GIOVANNI DEGLI ERMETI: PARLIAMENT OF SICILIAN VESPER.**



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crowd. Men, women, and children, officers, soldiers, and priests were alike butchered. Palaces and convents were broken into; and, of the four thousand Frenchmen quartered in Palermo, not one was left alive.

The Sicilian vespers had avenged the cruel outrages and the heartless oppression of the reign of Charles of Anjou. Such bloodthirsty ferocity, remarks the historian Palmeri, would stamp for ever the Sicilian name with indelible infamy, were it not justified in some degree by the illegal manner in which the Angevins had come into the possession of the kingdom — by the murder of Conrad and so many other victims, by the subversion of all law, and by the cruelty and the oppression under which the people had so long groaned.

The preparations which Charles had made for the invasion of the Greek empire were now diverted to quelling the rebellion in Sicily, which had spread rapidly from Palermo to the other cities of the island. He determined to wreak a bloody and lasting revenge on his rebellious Sicilian subjects; and, at the head of a formidable army, he besieged Messina. The city was overawed by his forces and offered to submit to his rule if he would promise a general

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pardon, restore their rights, and not permit Frenchmen to hold office in Sicily. But their overtures were spurned. Eight hundred of the rebels must forthwith be turned over to his tender mercies; he would restore none of the privileges which he had thought fit to withdraw, and he would appoint whom he saw fit to hold office in his dominions. The people of Messina decided to take their fate into their own hands; women and children joined in the struggle; and, although the besiegers reached the parapets, they were finally repulsed; the French fleet in the harbour was destroyed, and the baffled king fled to Calabria.

The crown of Sicily was offered by the national parliament to Peter of Aragon (1282-1285), who had married Constantia, the daughter of Manfred, and was accepted. Parliament, however, defined with considerable clearness the rights and privileges of the Sicilians which the king would be required to respect. For a hundred and forty years the island was an independent kingdom under the house of Aragon. Then for a season it was united to Naples. In 1479 it became a dependency of the Spanish crown through the accession of Ferdinand the Catholic to the crown of Spain. For many

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years the island was governed by Spanish vice-roys who wasted its resources and instituted a long line of evils which brought about the rapid degradation of the people.

The treaty of Utrecht in 1713 gave Sicily to Victor Amadeus of Savoy, who shortly afterwards exchanged it for Sardinia. In 1720 it fell under the Austrian dominion, and in 1735 it passed with Naples to the new Bourbon dynasty of Spain. The French troops invaded Naples during the revolutionary period of the republic; and in 1806 Napoleon made his brother Joseph — and later his brother-in-law Murat — King of the Two Sicilies. To preserve Sicily from an invasion by the French, the English, in alliance with the king of Naples, occupied the island from 1806 to 1815. They re-established the constitution and gave the island a measure of prosperity which it had not known since the days of the Normans. The peace of 1815 restored the island to the Bourbons, who continued their oppressions down to the appearance of Garibaldi and his thousand men in red shirts.

Mr. Gladstone once characterized the Bourbon rule as “the negation of God erected in the form of government.” Sicily had been

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joined with Naples; "the ancient liberties were laid prostrate at the feet of a despot;" patriots who ventured to protest were shot, and a new reign of absolutism commenced. Several times during the century the Sicilians made unsuccessful attempts to throw off the Bourbon yoke. But each of these revolutions was suppressed "with a ferocity to which a parallel can scarcely be found in the records of civilized warfare." An English admiral who witnessed the bombardment of Messina during the revolution of 1848 says that, after silencing the Sicilian batteries, the Bourbons entered the city and burned whole streets and committed ravages which were too horrible to be printed. After committing these barbarities the hypocritical Bourbon king at Naples issued a proclamation declaring that "his Majesty our lord the king, like a loving father of his people, forgets their past errors, in the certain persuasion that his Sicilian subjects will from henceforward return to that devoted and faithful attachment to his sacred person which has always endeared them to his heart."

Palermo fared no better. They had notified King Ferdinand that he must restore to them the constitution which had been granted by the

English in 1812 before a stated date or they would revolt. No attention was given to the matter; and on the appointed day, true to their threat, men ran through the streets of the city shouting "Long live the constitution." The revolution had the backing of the best people of Palermo, and after a few hours of fighting the Neapolitan troops capitulated. But "the king's army, when it evacuated Palermo, left desolation behind it as it marched along. Vineyards and gardens were destroyed, palaces and cabins were sacked and burned. Old men and the helpless were murdered, and their heads were carried on the march on soldiers' bayonets." After the restoration of peace, Ferdinand threatened to destroy Palermo with his bombs, as he had destroyed Messina, but France interposed. With the return of the Bourbons to Palermo "every man found with arms in his possession — even a fowling piece — was at once shot. In a few days upwards of one thousand people were put to death for this offence alone. The prisons — the horrible prisons — were filled with political captives, and every ship that sailed from the Sicilian shores bore away fresh exiles. New taxes were imposed, and a fine of twenty million ducats

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laid on the Sicilian people — ‘ such being,’ said the ordinance, ‘ the cost of insurrections.’ ”

An English traveller who visited Sicily shortly after the revolution of 1849 writes of the political condition of the island: “ With a reactionary government on one hand — maintained by force alone — and on the other hand a people profoundly detesting their oppressors, and ready to seize the first opportunity to throw off the yoke, nothing but fresh convulsions can be expected. Whether they will prove abortive or successful — and in the latter case what form of government Sicily will assume — it would be at the present moment idle to speculate, although the establishment of a free parliament, with a sovereign of their own choice, and a close alliance with Great Britain, would perhaps be that most in harmony with their ancient institutions and actual requirements, could the working of such a plan be but successfully carried out. But it is one of the chief curses of despotism that it tends to produce the opposite reaction of revolutionary excitement, and to lead a people to rush from one extreme to another, and the longer it endures, the more does it disqualify them for the blessings of a moderate and constitu-

tional system. On this ground alone every well-wisher of humanity must desire its speedy downfall." The deliverance of Sicily came only ten years after this paragraph was written.

The malevolent social and political qualities, which the Sicilians of to-day possess in such conspicuous degrees, are directly traceable to the tyranny to which the above quotation refers. In spite of the fact that the island was honeycombed with convents and monasteries when the Bourbons were driven out in 1860, more than ninety per cent. of the people could not read or write. The Mafia, the curse of modern Sicily, is a legacy from the Bourbons. Colajanni very properly remarks in this connection: "Justice under the Bourbons was so confused with political judgments that the people ended with seeing in every accused person a victim of governmental or baronial power. The police and judicial authorities in fact were at the orders of the feudatories who were in good odour in high government places. From this was born the distrust in equity and impartiality in public matters, so that all, great and small, felt that they must themselves provide for the security of property and person.



Thus the barons organized squadrons of *campieri*, a reproduction of the ancient *bravi*, selected from the most celebrated and courageous evildoers; and the people trusted for their revenges to Mafia and its code of *omertà*, and often to the brigand who became considered at such moments as a sympathetic and noble revenger of the weak oppressed by the strong. Private vendetta from being a right became considered a duty."

## CHAPTER VI

### GARIBALDI AND MODERN SICILY

**Aspirations for a united Italy—Political activities in Sardinia—Garibaldi and his thousand men in red shirts—Labours of Pilo, the Sicilian patriot—Arrival of Garibaldi's party at Marsala—First victory at Salemi—Success at Calatafimi—Successful entry into Palermo—Bombardment of the city by the Bourbons—Garibaldi dictator of Sicily—Union with Italy—Progress since unification—Economic condition—Influence of emigration—Sicilians in the United States—Industrial depressions—The food riots—What Italy has done for Sicily.**

THE barbarities of the Bourbons referred to in the last chapter, could not continue indefinitely. On the continent of Europe, and particularly in England, there was a strong feeling that these cruelties must cease; and, on more than one occasion the Queen's government had sent veiled threats to the cruel Bourbon king at Naples. The deliverer, however, in the end came from Italy. National aspiration for a united Italy had made rapid strides since the war of 1848, and Victor Emmanuel, the king of Sardinia, was universally regarded as the future unifier. Under the guidance of Cavour,

a gifted Italian statesman, the king entered upon a policy which, less than a dozen years later, brought about the gratification of the national desires. An alliance was formed with France; and, by the two great victories at Magento and Solferino, the Austrians were driven from Lombardy and the province was annexed to the kingdom of Sardinia. Unfortunately for Italy, the Sardinian king was forced to cede Nice and Savoy to France for the assistance which Louis Napoleon had given him. Three important sections of Italy were yet to be conquered. Venetia, in the north-east, was still in the hands of Austria; the States of the Church, in central Italy, were in the hands of the Roman pontiffs, and the Two Sicilies — the province of Naples and the island of Sicily — in the south, were governed by the Spanish Bourbons.

The conquest of Sicily and Naples by Garibaldi and his thousand red shirts is one of the most dramatic episodes in modern history. Rosalino Pilo, a Sicilian patriot, who was descended through his mother from the royal House of Anjou, was the originating spirit of the famous "march of the thousand." He was exiled from Sicily after the revolution of 1849;

and, having sold his ancestral estates on the island to supply the necessities of himself and fellow exiles, he had begun a vigorous work of revolutionary propaganda against the Bourbons. " Handsome in person," says the Countess Martinengo-Cesaresco, " cultivated in mind, ready to give his life, as he had already given most of what makes life tolerable, to the Italian cause, he won the affection of all with whom he was brought in contact, and especially of Mazzini, from whom he parted after that last interview radiant with hope, and yet with a touch of sadness in his smile, as if in prevision that the place allotted to him in the ranks of men was among the sowers, not among the reapers."

Young Pilo was convinced that Sicily was ripe for rebellion; and in March, 1860, with a few trusty companions, he took passage on an old coasting vessel from Genoa for the island. He eluded the vigilance of the Bourbon officials, landed unnoticed near Messina, and was soon joined in the mountains by armed bands of Sicilian patriots. He was sanguine of success if only Garibaldi and a small force could be induced to invade the island. Pilo's letters, and the political conditions which they

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revealed, induced the liberator to make the undertaking. Many of the friends of unification were convinced that the expedition was foredoomed; and they were unwilling to lose one who meant so much to the beloved cause as Garibaldi. But, "like all men of action, Garibaldi did not know what doubt was after he came to a decision."

In an astonishingly short time he had made his preparations. He had selected one thousand companions who expressed willingness to share his perils, and together they sailed from Genoa. The fleet, composed of two small merchant vessels, cast anchor at Marsala under the cover of two friendly English gunboats on the eleventh of May, 1860. From Marsala Garibaldi marched his men inland to the mountain town of Salemi, which was already in rebellion against the Bourbon king. Here he issued a decree announcing himself as dictator of Sicily in the name of Victor Emmanuel. He was joined by two hundred fresh volunteers and a "fluctuating mass of Sicilian irregulars." It was a motley crowd that joined him as he marched from Salemi to Calatafimi and from Calatafimi to Palermo. A few of the recruits were nobles and priests, but most of them were



MOUNTAIN PEASANT AT CALATAFIMI.

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mountain shepherds dressed in goat-skins and armed with antiquated flint muskets. The priests, Garibaldi tells us in his account of the expedition, exerted a distinctly helpful influence among the ignorant peasants; for they professed to relieve their general from the ill effects of the pope's bull of excommunication.

At Calatafimi, another hill town, occupied by three thousand Bourbon troops with four pieces of artillery, after a hard fight the seemingly impregnable position was won the 15th of May. Garibaldi now determined to attack Palermo and he sent a message to Rosalino Pilo to join him on the heights near Monreale. Pilo had held his ragged band together by the force of his personal influence; and when the tidings of the victory at Calatafimi reached him he said to his half starved men, "the cause is won." The united forces of the two leaders, including peasant recruits, did not exceed five thousand men, as against thirty thousand Bourbon regulars, eighteen thousand of whom were stationed at Palermo.

While making a reconnoissance in the region of Monreale, young Pilo was struck by a Bourbon bullet and instantly killed. By a shrewd piece of generalship, Garibaldi quickly aban-



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done the approach from Monreale, and made his entry to Palermo from Piana dei Greci. He had left a handful of men at Monreale to kindle innumerable camp-fires. This stratagem gave him the capital; for he got into the city without a battle, although he encountered some hard street fighting when once there. The Bourbon troops were repulsed and forced to retreat to the palace and the citadel. The rejoicings of the population over the defeat of the hated oppressors was of the wildest sort. They rushed to the belfries to sound the tocsin, but the Bourbons had preceded them and removed the clappers of the bells. Undaunted they beat the bells all day with hammers.

But rejoicing was soon turned into terror. The troops from the citadel and the marines from the harbour bombarded the city. The Bourbon general had decided that if he could not retake the city he could at least destroy it. The foreign embassies at Palermo without an exception denounced the bombardment and its attendant horrors as unworthy of our time and civilization. An English admiral, whose squadron was in the harbour at the time, wrote to Lord Palmerston: "A whole district, one thousand English yards in length by one hun-

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dred yards wide, is in ashes. Families have been burned alive, with the buildings, while the atrocities of the royal troops have been frightful. In other parts, churches, convents, and isolated buildings have been crushed by the shells, eleven hundred of which were thrown into the city from the citadel. The conduct of Garibaldi, both during the hostilities and since their suspension, has been noble and generous."

But the disciplined troops of King Bomba, as the Neapolitan tyrant was called because of the large number of ruthless bombardments in Sicily, after ten days had to treat with Garibaldi. General Lanza and his brilliant personal staff, with fifteen thousand royal troops, were put on board twenty-four steam transports and dispatched to Naples. As the vanquished general left the harbour, Garibaldi permitted the white flag of the King of the Two Sicilies to be hoisted for the last time in Sicilian waters. "Thus," writes the Countess Martinengo-Cesaresco, "wrapped in the dignity of misfortune, vanished the last semblance of the graceless and treacherous thralldom of the Spanish Bourbons in the capital of Sicily." The revolution triumphed with extraordinary

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rapidity everywhere on the island, except at Messina, Milazzo, and Syracuse. With reinforcements Garibaldi made his way to the eastern strongholds of the Bourbons. Milazzo and Syracuse were won by the end of July, although Messina did not capitulate until March of the following year. The practical conquest of the island, however, was a matter of only about six weeks.

Garibaldi was momentarily made dictator of the island. He selected a cabinet, the ruling spirit of which was Francesco Crispi, a Sicilian patriot who had been one of the thousand red shirts. It was, however, found much more difficult to set up a new government than to tear the old one down; and endless differences and antagonisms sprung up between Garibaldi and Crispi and Cavour. The island was in a forlorn condition; and, while Garibaldi may have made blunders during his brief dictatorship, they were mistakes of the head rather than of the heart. It is not too much to say that the island made more real progress during the few months that he was in power than in the half century that has followed. His interest in the material betterment of the Sicilians was unbounded; and, although the recognized head of the gov-

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ernment, he lived at Palermo with a frugality that scandalized the old servants of the Bourbon governors whom he had retained. He allowed himself a civil list of only eight francs (\$1.60) a day; and he was so characteristically generous that "the morning had never far advanced before his pockets were empty, and he had to borrow small sums from his friends, which the next morning were faithfully repaid."

Sicily has not been forgetful of the memory of her noble liberator. Almost every city on the island has a Corso to Garibaldi. There is at the capital a handsome equestrian statue by Ragusa which represents the general in the act of addressing his colleague Bixio just before the entry into Palermo. The bronze reliefs on the pedestal represent "I Mille" (the thousand) at Calatafimi and the Lion of Caprera breaking the chains of tyranny. During his lifetime, writes a biographer, "Italy showed him an unforgetting love; when he came to the continent, the same multitudes waited for him as of old, but instead of cheers there was a not less impressive silence now, lest the invalid should be disturbed." Garibaldi died on the little island of Caprera, off

the coast of Sardinia, the 2nd of June, 1882. He is buried in an olive grove, and on the anniversary of his death thousands of grateful Italians and Sicilians make pilgrimages to his final resting place.

By a plébiscite of the 21st of October, 1860, Sicily joined the new kingdom of Italy, and the latter took up the long arrears that came to her from governments that loved darkness. Progress has been halting and less rapid than many Sicilian patriots had expected. But everything had to be done; and united Italy had not professed the power of working miracles. The island was in need of complete transformation. There were no regular lines of navigation, no railways, no highways, no efficient schools, no provisions for the sanitation of the cities and towns — none of the hundred and one modern requirements. Large sums of money have necessarily been spent on the internal improvements of the island, and much larger sums have gone as Sicily's constantly increasing ratio of army and navy expenditures. Taxes have, therefore, made incredible leaps, and the resources of the island have not kept pace with the pressing demands of the officials at Rome.

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Sicily depends exclusively upon the products of the soil; and, as will be shown in a subsequent chapter, the economic conditions of the peasant farmers could not well be worse. The system of protection, which the Italian government has seen fit to adopt, may have enriched a handful of manufacturers in the northern provinces of the kingdom; but it has impoverished unmistakably the masses in Sicily. Wages are low — from fourteen to seventy-five cents a day — and the necessities of life are costly. The average annual wage of the Sicilian householder is less than one hundred dollars — eight dollars and a half a month, or twenty-eight cents a day — and his family is inordinately large.

Emigration from the island is something enormous, and it takes for the most part the able-bodied men. More than forty thousand Sicilians go to the Americas every year and many never return. Many Sicilian towns have lost from one-fifth to one-half of their population during the past fifteen years. When the mayor of a small commune, addressing the prime minister of Italy said, “ I salute you, sir, in the name of ten thousand constituents, eight thousand of whom are already in the

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United States and the other two thousand are preparing to go," he stated the grim humour of the situation.

The largest emigration has been to the United States, but the Americans have not welcomed with open arms the children of the Garden of the Mediterranean. Their ignorance is proverbial; they accept work at very low wages; they huddle together in filth and squalor; they refrain from participation in the civic affairs of America; their savings are sent back to Sicily, and they indicate an entire lack of appreciation of the filthy slums of the New World by returning to Sicily when they have earned a little money. It is generally admitted however, that they constitute the most trustworthy element of unskilled labour in the United States, and that their service is essential in the construction of railways, the tunnelling of mountains, and other industrial enterprises. Writing of the fifteen thousand Italian residents of New Orleans, ninety-three per cent. of whom are Sicilians, Mr. John J. D. Trainer says: "Their industry and orderliness confute the prejudice which still lingers against the immigrants from the southern Italian provinces. Under fair conditions, as in this

city, there are no widespread disturbances nor any ground for complaint against the mass of the people.”

Whenever Sicilians have become agricultural labourers in the United States they have done well. Thousands of them have settled along the line of the Illinois Central Railroad in Louisiana and have developed the strawberry industry; and an altogether unprejudiced observer says of them: “ Their good conduct and success attest the character and adaptive faculty which so many southern Italians in this country are showing in the face of existing prejudice.” Of twenty-four hundred Sicilians, chiefly from Trapani and the west coast, now engaged in farming in the vicinity of Bryan, Kansas, a competent authority says, “ In point of industry, thrift, good conduct, and prosperity, they need not shun comparison with the immigrants from any other part of Italy or from any other country.”

Writing of his relations with the agricultural Italians in the Gulf states, Mr. L. H. Lancaster says: “ The class with whom I have come in contact is not what would be considered desirable, being entirely of the Sicilian type. While the original infusion was of a low class,



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illiterate and tending to be unruly and used only to hard manual labour, having had no training nor education and not being capable for scientific pursuits or intensified agricultural labours without close attention — yet I can say that their offspring are the brightest and most ambitious and quickest of perception that we have in the public schools. Moreover, they are of a very amiable and polite disposition.”<sup>1</sup> Whatever we may think of the Sicilians who come to our shores — and evidence like the above indicates that they are less undesirable than is commonly supposed — Italian statesmen view the large emigration from Sicily to the United States with alarm.

Once the chief source of sulphur for the United States, the profits of the mines in Sicily have dwindled greatly in competition with the sulphur mines of Louisiana. Similarly the extension of lemon groves in California has paralyzed another Sicilian industry. The triple alliance and tariff wars have resulted in the loss of the French market for Sicilian wines; and the diseases which have attacked the vineyards and orchards have added to the disturbed economic conditions. To add to a long

<sup>1</sup>The Italians in America. New York, 1905.

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line of calamities the recent earthquake cost the island a hundred thousand lives, millions of dollars in the destruction of property, and the second most important commercial city.

The food riots of 1898, which continued for nearly three months, caused the government at Rome considerable anxiety. The anger of the people was directed against the grain dealers who were supposed to be responsible for the marked rise in the price of bread and macaroni. There were likewise demonstrations against the municipal authorities who had advanced the duty on flour. The disturbances were finally suppressed and the government made feeble efforts to mitigate the grievance by reducing temporarily the duty on flour. But the impulsive character of the Sicilians is favourable to repeated revolutions of the nature of the bread riots.

The Sicilians are a hopeful people; and while they lament the numerous misfortunes that they have had to meet since they became a part of the united kingdom, they recognize that in many departments, the island is centuries in advance of Bourbon conditions when Garibaldi came to them in 1860. Brigandage has largely disappeared; the operations of the

Mafia have been curtailed; vast tracts of land, then in the hands of the church, have been secularized and made productive; more than seven hundred miles of railway have been constructed; some good public highways and bridges have been built, and the illiteracy of the island has diminished nearly thirty per cent. These are some of the gains that have resulted from unification.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE PEOPLE OF SICILY

The Sicilians a mixed race—Some of the dominant ethnic elements—Racial types in different parts of the island—The Albanians—The Lombards—Results of race mixture—Mental characteristics—Attitude toward truth—Treatment of animals—Low rank in matters of cleanliness—Superstitions—Passion for gambling—Evils of the government lottery—Hospitality to foreigners—Peasant costumes—Sicilian dwellings.

THE people of Sicily have undergone many changes since the settlement of the island more than three thousand years ago; and the amount of race mixture that has taken place, as the result of the conquests of the varied ethnic stocks, has been enormous. Irrespective of the original races—the Sikans, Sikel, and Elymians—more than a dozen different nations have occupied the island since the historic period. A strong infusion of Arab blood came with the Phœnicians, the Carthagenians, and the Saracens. The Greeks were for a number of centuries a very populous race in Sicily—numbering probably several millions. The in-

vasions of the Goths and Vandals and other German barbarians left behind a Teutonic trace. The influence of the occupation of Sicily by the Romans, for a period of seven hundred years, was very great, not because so many Romans came to live on the island, but because of the heterogeneous elements which Rome brought together from the ends of the earth and took to Sicily as soldiers, slaves, merchants, and craftsmen. At a later period large numbers came to Sicily from Germany, France, Spain, and northern Italy, where the Lombard element was strong.

Thus it will be seen that racially the Sicilians are as little of Italian ethnic stock as the Americans are of English stock. They speak the Italian language and form a part of united Italy. But through their veins streams Aryan, Semitic, and Egyptian blood, with a slight trace of the negroid stocks of northern Africa. Individual racial elements are more pronounced in some parts of the island than in others. In Palermo the Arab types are most common. The same is true of the western parts of the island. In these same provinces the negroid type — black woolly hair, stumpy upturned noses, and thick lips — is sometimes



ALBANIAN GREKS AT PIANO DEL GRECI.

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met, particularly among the women. In the southeastern provinces, on the other hand, one meets the regular features, the arched brows, and the straight noses commonly associated with the Greeks. The fair hair and the blue eyes of the Lombards are not of unusual occurrence. And in isolated parts of the island one finds the Suabian type with a good deal of purity. It may, however, well be doubted whether the Spaniards materially altered the ethnic stock during the centuries that they were in possession of Sicily.

A few racial stocks in Sicily have remained relatively pure. One of these is the Albanians. The Albanian Greeks fled from their highland homes before the oppressions of the Turks<sup>1</sup> in 1488; and, at the invitation of the then-reigning king of Sicily, a half dozen colonies came to the island. They are congregated in the towns of Piana dei Greci, Bianca-villa, Palazzo-Adriano, Mezzoiuso, and at several other places. They are known locally as Greci. They form separate communities; speak their own language, and cling to the re-

<sup>1</sup> See the author's *Turkey and the Turks: An Account of the Lands, the Peoples, and Institutions of the Ottoman Empire*. Boston, L. C. Page and Company; London, George Bell and Sons, 1907. Second edition, revised and enlarged, 1909.



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ligious ceremonies and social customs of their race. The women enjoy a local reputation for their beauty and the men for their self-assurance. Some picturesque national costumes may be seen in the Albanian villages on festival days. In the days when brigandage flourished, the Albanians furnished more than their quota to the roving bands of bandits.

The Lombards have also retained a degree of their original purity. They accompanied Adelaide of Montferrat, wife of Roger I, to Sicily and colonized at San Fratello, Nicosia, Randazzo, Sperligna, Capizzi, and elsewhere. They are tall, broad-shouldered, and fair, and more enterprising than most of the other inhabitants. Because of their keen monetary sense they are sometimes nicknamed " Sicilian Jews." The Lombard dialect is still spoken among them. Unlike the other countries of Europe, and of peninsular Italy, Sicily has no Hebrews. It is too distinctly an agricultural country to tempt the talents of the children of Israel. In the days of the Saracens, however, they constituted a large and influential element of the population of the island.

The constant mixture of different races Mr. Crawford thinks directly responsible for the

lack of genius in Sicily. "One people after another," he says, "have taken possession of it, each amalgamating in some degree with the last, but the welding of the races has not made a great race, nor has any first element outlasted and outruled the others. In the balance of the world's forces, Sicily has been feminine and reproductive rather than masculine and creative; endowed with supreme natural beauty, she has been loved by all, she has favoured many, and she has borne sons to a few, sons such as Archimedes and Theocritus, Dionysius and Agathocles, King Roger and Frederick II of Hohenstauffen, of Greek, Norman and German blood. But if we ask for a great man whom we may call a Sicilian, we must ask what Sicilians were, and we shall receive different answers in different ages — Greeks, Arabs, Normans, Spaniards, and Italians have all been Sicilians at one time or another."<sup>1</sup>

In the matter of mental characteristics there are many traits which the people of Sicily share with the Italians. They are hasty in speech, vivid in imagination, affable, friendly

<sup>1</sup>F. Marion Crawford. *Rulers of the South*. New York, 1900.

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and benevolent. But they are cruel, obstinate, and suspicious, and they get into a passionate fury at the most trifling offences. On the other hand there are frequent manifestations of marked external dignity and exemplary conduct. Sicily is distinctly a temperate land, so far as excessive drinking and eating are concerned, and drunkenness is of very rare occurrence, although the Sicilians drink moderate quantities of light wine with their meals.

Truthfulness is not held in high esteem among the masses of the people, not because they wish to shield themselves by lying, but because they do not place truth-telling among the virtues. An English traveller once remarked that there were three classes of liars. The first class were simply liars; the second class expert liars, and the third class Sicilians. The Sicilian viewpoint is well expressed in their proverb, "*La virità si dici a lu cunfissuri*" (one tells the truth to his confessor). As in Greece and the Orient, no disgrace is associated with falsehood. In spite of their long association with the people of Spain, there is not among the Sicilians that fine sense of honour which one might expect.

In their maltreatment of their mules and

donkeys and their cruelty to animals in general, they show their kinship with the inhabitants of southern Italy. Cruelty to animals is the rule; and, although the Naples society for the prevention of cruelty to animals has branches at Taormina, Girgenti, and elsewhere, there is still a rich field in Sicily for those philanthropists who would like to alleviate the suffering of dumb beasts. A Sicilian rarely walks. Even the humblest peasant possesses himself of an aged mule or donkey and rides to and from his work. The passion for driving is likewise strong among all classes. On holidays it is not uncommon to see a half dozen people squeeze into a victoria and the entire human freight must be drawn by one sorry looking horse. Families, I was told, save up their pennies during the week that they may hire a cab on Sunday; and among the better classes, a horse and carriage is often owned in common by a number of families.

Neither does the Sicilian take high rank in the matter of cleanliness. But cleanliness is a relatively new institution, having been invented in Holland in the fifteenth century, and gradually introduced in England, Germany, Switzerland, and the Scandinavian countries.

The Latin countries, however, have never taken very kindly to the invention; and in Sicily it is not generally found among the common people. There is a saying among travellers on the island that one goes to a *hôtel* not to eat but to be eaten. So far as the better *hôtels* are concerned they are generally clean, being kept by Germans and Swiss. I patronized several *hôtels*, however, that were kept by Sicilians, and I had no occasion for the use of the ample supply of insect powder with which I had provided myself.

The Sicilian peasants are spiteful, revengeful, and superstitious. They place great store by the power of the evil eye, and employ multitudes of antidotes to neutralize its bad effects. Objects made of coral, mother-of-pearl, and ivory are especially efficacious; and even the donkeys are decorated with amulets that they may not come under the influence of the evil eye. If one is aware of its presence, pointing in its direction with the first and fourth fingers will also avert its bad effects. Severe storms are prevented by placing a child under seven years in the street. The child recites a supplication to St. John and three pieces of bread are thrown, one in front of the child, one

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back of it, and one at its feet. Eclipses are always followed by epidemics. The saints also play a leading rôle in the lives of the peasants, as will be noted in a subsequent chapter.

Gambling on a small scale is universal and the lottery is one of the national institutions which is patronized by all classes of society. It is under the control of the government and the people are encouraged to waste their small earnings in this form of gambling. Lotto banks are as numerous as tobacco shops, and lotto books and dream books are everywhere exposed for sale. Mathematicians, fortune-tellers, somnambulists, and priests are also in demand to aid in determining lucky numbers. Disasters and dreams are utilized in the investment of lottery tickets. The drawings take place weekly and the chance of those who put their money in the lottery is five to ninety. The government uses the lottery as a means of acquiring revenue; but as sixty per cent. of the government's part goes in the administration of the system, a direct tax would be no more oppressive and it would be less pernicious. As has been well said: "The lottery system is a cancer in the well-being of the na-

tion, as each superfluous penny instead of being put aside is gambled away."

Sicilians are singularly hospitable, even to rude tourists, who poke their noses into the most private nooks and corners. An English woman relates this experience: She stopped one day before a peasant hovel to watch the housewife cooking the dinner over a tiny charcoal basin. Observing the stranger's interest in her domestic affairs, she asked if the lady would like to see a corpse. "My husband," she added, "died last night and is still up stairs. He looks so beautiful because he was a good man." The narrator insists that the invitation was kindly meant.

The burial customs in Sicily are not unlike those in the other Latin countries. The hearse is an open wagon. Priests carrying candles precede it, and members of the burial guild follow on foot. Then follow a few empty carriages. Most of the Sicilians belong to burial guilds, which take the place of lodges in America in the interment of the dead. The members attend the funerals of their colleagues in white robes which cover the entire body to the feet, with small openings for the eyes and mouth. The burial guilds often own their own cemeter-



SICILIAN PEASANT IN CAPPA.



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ies. Strips of black cloth are nailed across a window or door as a sign of mourning, bearing inscriptions that indicate the relationship of the dead to the mourner, as "*Per mia madre*" (for my mother), etc. All such notices must bear a government stamp which costs two cents. After the great disaster at Messina it was interesting to note that even the poorest peasants displayed the conventional symbols of mourning for their deceased countrymen.

Some of the Sicilian peasants cling to the picturesque costumes of by-gone ages. The *cappa*, a hooded cloak, is quite generally worn by the men. It is made of dark blue or black cloth and reaches to the thighs. The hood is used as a protection to the head in cold and inclement weather. The women generally wear variegated shawls and saffron coloured handkerchiefs for headgear. Among the peasants no footgear is worn during the week, but sandals are worn on Sundays. I recall at Syracuse engaging a boatman on a holiday to row me up the Anapo. He was attired in his best garb; but before the start he removed his good clothes, including his shoes, and it transpired that underneath the holiday vestments were his weekday clothes. The water carriers, with

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classic urns and vases gracefully posed on the shoulders, and attired in simple but highly coloured clothing, give a picturesque touch to a landscape bathed in a more brilliant sunshine than one finds anywhere else in Europe.

The dwellings of the Sicilian peasants are little more than hovels. They usually have only one room, often windowless, or lighted only by the door, for windows are a luxury in Sicily; good glass is very expensive and cheap glass cracks in the hot sun. The floor is of worn stone, the walls are rudely plastered, and the only heat in winter comes from the small charcoal brazier that is used in preparing the food. An iron bedstead, a shaky table, and a few rude chairs cover the furnishings. The walls are decorated with political caricatures taken from the newspapers, advertisements of steamship lines to the United States and South America, and a wooden crucifix suspended in the corner. Over the doorway one often sees a rude carving of the Mother of Christ and her Child or a great cross scrawled in the whitewash. But the Sicilian peasants have learned the art of living out of doors. The street is their drawing room.



**"THE STREET IS THEIR DRAWING - ROOM."**

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## CHAPTER VIII

### SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE PEOPLE

**Prevailing poverty in Sicily—Widespread habit of begging—Large place occupied by murder and other crimes—Robbery and counterfeiting—Illegitimacy—Conflict of state and church in matters of marriage—Burdens of taxation—Low wages and high cost of living—Evils of the system of protective tariff.**

THE poverty of Sicily is more terrible than in any other country so highly favoured by nature as the Garden of the Mediterranean. Alexandre Dumas has so graphically described it that I give his words: "Here poverty is seen in all its hideousness, with fleshless, feeble limbs and cavernous, feverish eyes. It is hunger with its cries of suffering, with its eternal death-rattle—hunger that triples the years on the faces of young girls; hunger that makes the young Sicilian maiden, at an age when in all other lands women are beautiful with youth, seem falling into decrepitude; hunger more cruel, more implacable, more deadly than debauchery that blasts and withers, without af-

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fording, like debauchery, the gross and sensual comforts of its rival in destruction."

"*Eccellenza, morto di fame*" (Kind sir, I am dying of hunger) is the salutation that the traveller meets every hour of the day. Beggars are everywhere, often half-naked, insolent, and savage; and if one begins to give, there is simply no end to the matter. Apparently no disgrace attaches to begging, for one is often solicited by young people who do not give the impression of being paupers. I recall at one of the cathedrals my tell-tale Baedeker led a well-dressed worshipper to cease his devotions and an altar boy to leave his pious tasks to solicit alms. From the foreigner, at least, everyone may beg. Doubtless much of the begging in Sicily is due to dire poverty; but much is also due to a habit of begging acquired in childhood and to a lack of that fine self-sense which the right sort of an elementary school training ought to give. Two other reasons may be assigned to the universal begging practices in Sicily. The government makes no sort of adequate provision for the worthy poor and the dominant church encourages it as a means of cultivating the Christian virtue of charity. Pawnbroking shops are

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under governmental superintendence, thus checking possibilities of usury that might otherwise exist. But the presence of dire poverty everywhere costs the traveller many keen pangs of sorrow.

The crime record of Sicily is not enviable. In respect to the number of felonies and serious misdemeanours it has the highest record in Europe. Its coefficients for condemnations for murder are six times greater than northern Italy and eighteen times greater than England. The numerous crimes of violence—murder, attempted murder, rape, and offences against morals—have been attributed to the passionate nature of the people, the custom of exacting vengeance for grievances, the warm southern climate, the bad political institutions, and the defective social and economic conditions. Murder, manslaughter, and violence are matters of every-day occurrence.

For every one hundred thousand inhabitants the crimes for murder and manslaughter in the seven provinces of Sicily during the past century were Girgenti, 65.88; Caltanissetta, 42.04; Palermo, 32.29; Catania, 24.76; Trapani, 21.26; Messina, 19.77, and Syracuse, 12.04. Four provinces in northern Italy for the same period



and the same crimes give the following figures: Como, 2.54; Milan, 2.45; Rovigo, 2.13, and Treviso, 0.75. The dagger and the revolver and the stiletto form a part of the personal outfit of every young man over fifteen years of age; and, although there are laws against carrying concealed weapons, the practice is universal. I was told by a German long resident in Sicily that at the theatres, the cafés, the universities — and even in the high schools — it was quite impossible to meet a person who did not carry a dangerous weapon. Cuidera states that, considering the poverty of the people, the amount of money expended by the Sicilians in the purchase of firearms — revolvers and rifles — is stupendous.<sup>1</sup>

Crimes for robbery with violence are five times more frequent in Sicily than in the northern provinces of Italy. The same is true of crimes against morals; whereas in respect to theft the proportions for the Sicilian provinces are not distinctly higher than those of northern Italy. The coining of silver money and the forging of bank notes are matters of relatively common occurrence; but for such crimes the

<sup>1</sup>Leonardo Cuidera. *Vivai criminali in Sicilia*. Palermo, 1903.

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government is not wholly blameless. Silver coins are often so badly stamped and the paper money so worn that imitations are easily made, and one is never absolutely sure of holding valid money. Worn coins and torn bank notes remain too long in circulation, and they give rise to endless altercations on street cars, at railway stations, and in shops. New issues, however, are sometimes promptly followed by imitations. This was the case the past winter with a new issue of twenty centesimi nickel pieces, and several years ago several million dollars' worth of one and two lira notes appeared simultaneously with the genuine notes.

The state of the morals of the Sicilians has improved with the advances made in general education since the expulsion of the Bourbons. As before pointed out, inebriety is rare, but unfortunately the stiletto often takes the place of the whiskey bottle. Illegitimacy is not common but it is certain to increase if the present confused marriage laws are allowed to persist. The Italian law requires a civil marriage before a mayor or his substitute. The Roman Catholic church requires an ecclesiastical marriage. Because of the opposition of the clergy to the obligation of the civil ceremony, couples are

often content with the blessings of the church. Such couples are treated by the government officially as unmarried; and, in the subsequent complications of the marital state, women are sometimes deserted and other evils arise from these undefined conditions. If the government is determined to maintain the practice of civil marriages, it should make it a misdemeanour for any priest to sanction the union of a couple without the civil certificate.

Sicily groans under an intolerable burden of taxation. Everything is burdened with imposts and the taxation is altogether out of proportion to the resources of the island. The Italians pay a higher percentage of their incomes in taxes than any other European country, with the single exception of Spain. They pay three times as much as the English and twice as much as the Germans. The burden unfortunately falls heaviest on the poorest people. At Palermo, for example, the working man pays four per cent. of his earnings in local taxes, the tradesman with an income of a thousand dollars pays one and a half per cent., and the property-holder (*rentier*) with an income of three thousand dollars pays only one-half of one per cent. The stamp taxes, the customs duties, the

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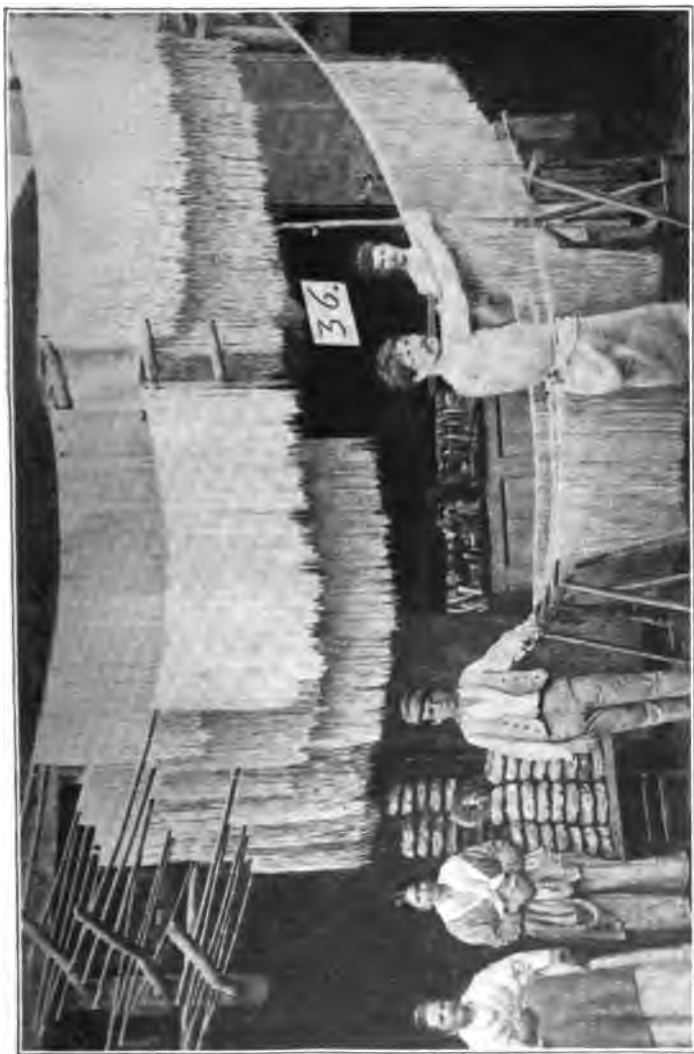
salt monopoly, the imposts on the soil, the lottery, and a score of others fall in large measure upon the small officials and the poorer classes. Even though he uses no wine, a day labourer pays from ten to twenty per cent. of his wages in direct and indirect taxes. Taxes on grain, flour, and maccaroni range from ten to fifteen per cent.

The small farmer carries the heaviest load of the direct taxes. His land is taxed from twenty to twenty-five per cent. on the net profits of the farm, and his cattle, if not actually used for work, must pay an additional communal tax. Roads are not infrequently made for the benefit of private individuals but at the expense of the towns. In one instance taxes were levied for the building of a new road, but all proprietors with holdings of more than forty acres were exempted. The system is so burdensome that evasions of a dozen and one kinds are of daily occurrence. The Sicilian relishes keenly his chance to cheat the tax collector and he is certain that he will not be prosecuted for his defalcations. "Everyone knows that it is done, and if the matter is not carried too far, they shut their eyes, in accordance with the proverbial precept, Live and let

live." But the moral effect of the practice is bad from every point of view.

The economic conditions which prevail in Sicily are distinctly unfavourable to the healthy social and moral development of the people. While wages are very low, rents and the necessities of life are exceptionally high. As already pointed out, the average annual income of the head of a Sicilian family is a trifle under one hundred dollars a year. In the tanneries at Messina, where I was told that the wages were above the average for similar labour elsewhere, finishers were paid seventy-seven cents a day, trimmers sixty-two cents, vatmen forty-two cents, and labourers thirty-eight cents. I was told by a lemon-grower that he paid his superintendent forty-four cents a day and his other help from forty to fifteen cents. Children and women often get as little as ten cents a day; and men who receive from forty to sixty cents a day are regarded as well-paid.

On the other hand the cost of living in Sicily is very high. The mean cost of a few of the necessities of life will give some notion of the hard conditions which the Sicilians have to face. Maccaroni, the chief article of food, costs from three to six cents a pound, according to



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quality. Flour costs from four to five dollars per hundred pounds; sugar from fourteen to eighteen cents a pound; coffee from fifty to sixty cents a pound, and cheese from twenty-five to thirty cents. Beef without bone costs fifty cents a pound, lamb thirty cents, bacon twenty cents, and chicken from twenty-eight to thirty-two cents. The price of fresh meat is fixed by the mayors of the towns and varies a trifle. Kerosene costs forty-eight cents a quart, olive oil thirty cents, and ordinary native wines eleven cents. Clothing, when the quality is considered, costs quite as much as in America. In Palermo and some other cities the bakeries are municipal affairs. The working people of Sicily live on cheap bread, maccaroni, fruit, and light wines. Maccaroni is the staple food of the island, and the quantities of yellow fringe, everywhere hung out to dry and exposed for sale in fantastic shapes in the shops, gives a picturesque touch to Sicilian towns.

Sicily has suffered more than any other part of the kingdom from the system of protective tariff which Italy adopted in 1887. It caused an immediate rupture with France and the loss of the French wine market and other products of the island. The tariff war which followed,



the two countries placing differential duties on each other's imposts, brought great suffering to the Sicilians and forced thousands to emigrate to the Americas or starve. The tariff was modified a bit in 1899, but it is still unduly burdensome. While it is granted that the tariff has given a certain stimulus to a few manufacturing cities in northern Italy, it is admitted that it has impoverished the masses of the people by greatly increasing the cost of the necessities of life and strengthened the evil alliance between capitalists and legislators which has been the source of endless corruption among tariff manipulators.

## CHAPTER IX

### HOSTELRIES, BRIGANDAGE, AND THE MAFIA

Sicilian inns — The practice of bargaining — Variations in tariffs — “Off” and “on” seasons — Accommodations — Brigandage — Its gradual disappearance — The function of the carabinieri — The Mafia — Its occult character — Nature of the organization — Political affiliations — The Notarbartolo affair — The methods of the Mafia — Its waning influence.

THE author does not wish to give the notion of a necessary relationship between hostelries, brigandage, and the Mafia; but he thinks that most travellers in the Garden of the Mediterranean will recognize a certain propriety in the chapter heading.

There are generally two classes of hostelries found in Sicily — those managed by foreigners, generally Swiss or German, and professing to be first-class, and those managed by natives and generally called *alberghi*. In addition to these one finds transient boarding-houses (*pensione*), often kept by German and English women, where accommodations may be secured for five or more days at moderate rates. Most

of the hôtels give an inclusive rate, generally called pension; but it is important to know in advance how many days one must remain in order to get the pension rate. At some Sicilian hôtels it is three days, at others five, and at a few a week. Indeed, it may change several times at the same hôtel during the lapse of a few weeks. Mr. A. had spent three days at the Grand Blank Hotel and had a pension rate of eleven liras a day.<sup>1</sup> He recommended the inn to his friend B., who understood he was to have the same rate; but when, at the end of four days, he came to settle his bill he found that he was forced to pay at the rate of fifteen liras a day because, as the proprietor insisted, he had in the interval changed his pension grace from three to seven days. The experience is by no means uncommon.

Bargaining is absolutely necessary if one does not wish to pay two or three times the customary tourist prices. And bargaining in Sicily partakes something of the nature of a pitched battle. Innkeepers know that if they should state at the outset the prices they customarily charge their guests that they would

<sup>1</sup>The lira is worth about twenty cents in American money and ten pence in English money.

be asked to reduce it; so they prudently give rates which are twenty, forty, or sixty per cent. more than they expect to get, but not more than they are willing to receive. If the traveller insists on a rate a third less than that originally demanded, he may rest assured that he is paying a good price for what he will get, and probably about double what natives pay for the same accommodations.

A few personal incidents will illustrate the practices current in Sicilian hostelries. A friend had recommended a certain hôtel in one of the tourist towns and said he had paid eight liras a day for very satisfactory accommodations; but he advised me to write in advance and have *in writing* a statement of the rates. The reply stated that if I planned to remain five or more days the rate would be fourteen liras a day; otherwise seventeen liras. When I reached the town the proprietor offered me a rate of eight liras. In another hôtel one traveller was paying eight liras a day and another fourteen for the same accommodations. One had written in advance and asked if he would secure comfortable accommodations for eight liras a day. The reply was in the affirmative. The other had written to ask what was

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the minimum price for comfortable accommodations; the reply stated fourteen liras a day. There is no fixed price, Baedeker to the contrary, notwithstanding.

In one case I had been persuaded not to go to the hôtel kept by a foreigner (and regarded as the only first-class hostelry in the town) because friends, who had been there the week previous and had been given an inclusive rate, had to pay thirteen liras in "extras" when they left. I was recommended to try an albergho which an American woman told me she had found satisfactory for seven liras a day. When I reached the inn the proprietor demanded twelve liras a day, and insisted that he had never given a seven-lira rate to any one, and that the traveller whose name I mentioned had never been a guest at his house. I produced my Baedeker which gave eight to ten liras as the rates for his hotel. He then explained that the Baedeker gave the rates for the "off" season, and that if I would come to his house in the summer he could take me for the prices there indicated. I questioned whether the present was not the "off" season, as I had been travelling some weeks in Sicily and that at several hostelries I was the only

guest. He assured me, however, that his hôtel was filled and that his servants were at that moment in the town trying to find rooms for a large party that was to arrive in the evening. During the three days I was at his inn I was the only guest; and as I was about to leave, he expressed the hope that I had found his place satisfactory and that I might recommend it to other tourists whom I met on my travels. I assured him that I was not satisfied with his rate; then he explained that, as this was the "off" season and there were few travellers and he had kept all his servants to look after my comfort during the time I was with him, he thought the rate by no means unreasonable.

On another occasion I arrived at a little mountain town in the early afternoon. The proprietor was absent for the moment, but I stated my needs — dinner in the evening, a bed for the night, and coffee and rolls in the morning — to the woman in charge and asked her what the tariff would be. She replied "eighteen liras." I attempted bargaining, but she was as firm as the huge rock on which the town was built. I accordingly left my luggage and went about my sight-seeing, in the hope that I might find the proprietor upon my return more

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likely to make satisfactory terms. I got back about six o'clock, and found, apparently, that my arrival had not been made known, for he asked only fourteen liras where his wife had demanded eighteen. When I called for his itemized tariff he stated that the dinner would cost five liras, the room eight, and the coffee and rolls one. I produced my guide-book wherein his rooms were scheduled at three liras. Then he explained that the room would cost only six liras, and that the figure stated in the guide-book was for a room with one bed; but that the room he had shown me, the only one vacant in his inn, contained two beds. After a deal of dickering he made me a rate of seven liras for the accommodations which I desired. I accepted on condition that the extra bed be removed from the room, as I did not wish him to violate his established tariff. He assured me that the bed would be taken away when I was at dinner; but upon my return it was there. I summoned him and demanded its removal in accordance with the agreement. He begged me to allow it to remain, as he frequently had to make a single rate for a double room to individual travellers; but as I could not be a party to the violation of his fixed

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schedule, the bed was taken from the room. I may add that after we had settled the matter of the tariff and the bed, I found him a most affable and obliging host, as is the case with most of the Sicilian innkeepers.

Neither the Sicilian hostelries nor their responsible managers are as bad as they are sometimes represented by tourists. It is the system; and, unless the traveller has a good supply of patience and some sense of humour he is pretty certain to meet annoyances in his travels on the island. I found but two hôtels in my travels that pretended to abide by their advertised schedule rates. But most of the innkeepers that I learned to know proved to be rather good fellows — of a somewhat higher order than the average of the human types customarily met in travel.

English, French, and German are generally spoken “ after a manner ” at the better class hôtels managed by foreigners, although it is not always the language “ as she is spoke ” at London, Paris, and Berlin. Posted over the washstand at one of the hôtels at which I stopped was a prohibition in the above languages. I give a copy of the English: “ Don’t put the waterpot upon the marble of the basin-



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stand, because the waterpot slides, falls, and breaks itself, and who breaks itself pays.'"

I may add that the Sicilian hôtels that give great publicity to the fact that this or that sovereign has been a guest are to be avoided. Royal tourists are entertained at relatively low rates as an advertisement to the house; and the travellers during the balance of the year pay for the *réclame*. Great progress has been made in the improvement of hôtels at the chief tourist centres during later years, and a good deal more remains to be done. The hôtel-keepers of the island have an association for the advancement of their interests. They would go a long way toward the accomplishment of their purpose by making some evidence of knowledge of practical ethics a requirement for admission to their ranks.

✓ Considering the high cost of food, the rates charged at Sicilian hostelries are not excessive, if the traveller is skilled in the art of bargaining. And the hôtel managers are fond of the game and give evidence of surprise if the tourist does not promptly engage in an altercation over the tariff. The food is generally fair and Sicilian cooks are superior to their confrères in Italy. At some places on the island men may



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stop at the hospicium established for pilgrims and administered by the religious orders. At Tyndaris even women may be entertained at the hospice of the Madonna del Tindaro by sending advance notice to the Superior. Lists of the hôtels will be found in the Baedeker and other guide books, although it is always wise to make inquiries of recent travellers. Some of the hôtels have really attractive gardens planted with palms, agaves, yuccas, aloes, bananas, daturas, and other subtropical shrubs, and others have terrace and roof gardens where great varieties of flowers are grown. In a number of places the hôtels occupy buildings formerly used for monastic purposes or as baronial palaces or villas. Such places often have interesting historic associations, but their sanitary arrangements sometimes leave much to be desired.

Brigandage as an organized system has largely died out since the Bourbons have been driven from the island. For many years, however, it was a veritable plague, and travel was made so insecure that foreigners did not dare venture far from the coast cities. Large numbers of men who had become marked for some misdemeanour fortified themselves in the

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mountains and harassed the surrounding country with plundering and extortion. While highway robbery still occurs, in recent years few foreigners have been molested. Landowners and natives of reputed wealth are sometimes carried to the mountains and held to ransom; but most of the late brigandage has been traceable directly to the Mafia as revenge against people who have asserted their authority. The brigands have had the tacit sympathy of many of the Sicilians, and particularly the poorer people. It has, therefore, been difficult to cope with the evil in those parts of the island where the guardians of the peace are natives. In the sulphur districts and elsewhere in Sicily it has been found necessary to take the enforcement of law and order from natives because of their notorious sympathy with brigands.

Hence, the institution of the *carabinieri* as a supplementary police force to the regular *polizia* and the *guardia di questura*. The *carabinieri* come largely from northern Italy. They are selected for their strength and courage, and are the finest specimens of men that one sees on the island, "the type of the Romans who conquered the world, as may be seen by comparing their strong chins and set faces with

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those of the friezes in the Lateran." The *carabinieri* go about in pairs. They wear long blue coats with cocked hats and they are armed with swords and revolvers. They are the only efficient police force in the lonely parts of the island, where they are armed with repeating rifles and sword bayonets, as well as revolvers; and they have been the chief means of bringing notorious brigands to justice and ridding the island of the brigandage plague.

The Mafia, which expresses an idea rather than a definitely organized institution, is a great curse to Sicily. It has brought about a state of criminal development which is accepted by reputable people who seek its protection and feel that they are forced to order their living and regulate their thinking by its code of ethics. To except the eastern coast, it operates everywhere in the island; and at Palermo it is all-powerful. No one professes to know much about it; and, although it was one of the subjects of conversation that I always introduced during my travels in Sicily, it was one that I found Sicilians least willing to discuss. And when they mentioned it at all, it was always with bated breath.

No one professes to know very much about

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it, although everyone recognizes its power. Some one has aptly characterized it as a degenerate form of chivalry. It has been claimed that it is a sort of superior court of the common people, like the lynching parties in the southern parts of the United States. During the long period when the Bourbons misgoverned the island, the peasants could not get justice at the hands of the authorities. This engendered a hatred of all governmental institutions and led them to take the law into their own hands. Hence, the Mafia in Sicily expresses the universal suspicion of all organized law and authority; and, in the present state of public opinion, those who hold to the principles of the *omeratà*, the unwritten code of the Mafia, will perjure themselves or go to prison for life rather than incriminate their fellows.

So far as there is any organization at all, it is composed of loosely federated bands of ten or a dozen members who go about murdering, cattle-lifting, vine-cutting and the like. But I was generally assured that there was little or no organization and few if any rites and formulas. Each gang is headed by an accomplished criminal who keeps his personality in the background, but who directs the

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activities of the gang. Blackmail is one of its chief sources of income.

The Mafia is by no means composed of the poorest and lowest people of Sicily. Landlords, tradesmen, priests, and politicians are sometimes found in its ranks; and the large landowners and middlemen sometimes use it as a means of oppressing the poor peasants. It is also used to terrorize electors and control elections. Such good use has been made of the ballot box that the island not infrequently sends representatives to the national parliament at Rome who are not unfriendly to the Mafia's aims. Its practices are thus strikingly like those of the great industrial corporations of the United States in the matter of elections to our national senate.

I was repeatedly assured while in Sicily, by men who have the best interests of the nation at heart, that there were well understood relations between the Mafia and the politicians, and that its members were permitted to carry concealed weapons and levy blackmail so long as they succeeded in terrorizing the opposition and gave the desired turn to elections. The Notarbartolo incident goes far toward the confirmation of this viewpoint.



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Signor Notarbartolo, a responsible government official, discovered frauds on the part of Palizzolo, a colleague and an active politician. He reported the matter to his superior at Rome, and a week later was surprised to find his report in the hands of Palizzolo. Shortly afterwards the dead body of Notarbartolo was found riddled with bullets. It was well known that Palizzolo was in league with the Mafia; and that it had murdered the bank official was generally recognized; but, as Palizzolo was a member of the national parliament and in control of the subsidized mafiosi-government, it was impossible to bring the culprits to justice. Evidence was suppressed and the matter was hushed up. Six years later, as the result of the perseverance of Notarbartolo's son, the unwilling authorities were forced to bring Palizzolo and his confederates to trial; but, as in all such cases where the Mafia is concerned, conviction was impossible.

The most favourable statement of the Mafia that I have found is that by Professor Pietrè. He says: "The Mafia is neither a sect nor an association. It has neither regulations nor statutes. A mafioso is not a thief nor a rascal; and if for an outward meaning of the word



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the quality of mafioso has been applied to the thief and the rascal, it is simply because the greater part of the public has had no time to reflect upon the value of the word, nor has it cared to know that in the thief's and rascal's own estimation the mafioso is simply a bold and valiant man — one who will not tolerate any insult whatever. Mafia is the consciousness of one's individuality, the exaggerated conceit of one's strength, which is regarded as the sole arbiter of every dispute, of every conflict of interests and opinions, which results in an intolerance of anyone else's superiority, or worse still, anybody else's power."

The following is one of the best brief statements of the Mafia that has come to my notice: "It represents the survival among the people of a preference for owning the security of their persons and property rather to their own strength and influence than to those of the law and its officers. Therefore a distinction is drawn between the high and the low Mafia; the latter, embracing the great mass of members, who themselves are not active in the matter, are afraid to set themselves against the Mafia, and are content to accept the protection of this shadowy league, which in them inspires more

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awe than do the courts of justice. Indeed, much of the Mafia's strength and vitality is directly due to this looseness of organization, and to the fact that it is an ingrained mode of thought, an idea, and not an organized society, that the government has to root out. Direct robbery and violence are resorted to only for vengeance; for practical purposes the employment of isolation—in fact, the system of boycotting carried to the extreme point—is sufficiently efficacious. From the landlords blackmail is levied in return for protection, and they must employ mafiosi only on their farms; and the vendetta follows those who denounce or in any way injure a member of the fraternity. The Mafia controls elections, protects its members against the officers of justice, assists smugglers, directs strikes, and even fixes the hire of workmen."

In spite, however, of its widely recognized influence and its alliance with politicians, the Mafia is losing ground, and it may confidently be hoped that at no very distant day it will, like brigandage, be a thing of the past. The best minds of the island recognize that it is inimical to the intellectual and economical well-being of Sicily, and some strong voices are

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raised against it. But Sicilian politicians, like their confrères in France and America, are apt to consult only their own immediate interests; and so long as they are permitted to use the Mafia to secure elections the institution is likely to persist.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The best Sicilian account of the Mafia will be found in Antonio Cutera's *La Mafia e i Mafiori: Origini e Manifestazioni*. Palermo, 1900.

## CHAPTER X

### RELIGION AND SAINTS

Sicily the home of some of the oldest cults — Early Introduction of Christianity — Establishment of the Moslem faith with the coming of the Saracens — Dominance of the Roman Catholic religion — Sensuous character of the creed of the Sicilians — Important rôle played by the saints — Santa Lucia and Syracuse — Santa Agatha the ruling force at Catania — The nature of her festivals — Santa Rosalia and Palermo — Her shrine and effigy on Monte Pellegrino — The Virgin the protectress of the ill-fated Messina — Festivals of the Madonna della Lettera — The Greek church in Sicily — Social status of the clergy — The Waldensians and other Protestant bodies.

SICILY has been the seat of some of the most interesting religions of the world. The worship of Ceres probably antedated the coming of the Phœnicians and the Greeks. In its simpler form the cult of the goddess of grain was worshipped by the Sikans who, so far as is known, were the first inhabitants on the island. When the Phœnicians came, they brought with them their various Baal cults and the worship of Ashtoreth and Moloch. The great temple of Ashtoreth was on Mount Eryx. “ The pop-

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ular legend," remarks Mr. Perry, " carries the connection between Aphrodite (Ashtoreth) and Sicily back to the time of the expedition of the Argonauts. When the demigods who manned the famous ship Argo were passing the rock on which the two sirens sat and sang, Orpheus, knowing the dangerous allurements of their sweet voices, tried to drown them in the heavenly music of his sweet lyre. He succeeded in saving all the Argonauts but one named Butes, a son of the great ruler of the sea, Poseidon. To him the dulcet tones of the sirens proved irresistible, and he threw himself into the sea. But Aphrodite took pity on him, and bore him in her arms to Lilybæum in Sicily, where she bare him a son and called him Eryx. He founded a temple to his mother on Mount Eryx, where a number of slaves, called the Hierodules, were given to the goddess and made to increase the treasures of the temple by their labour." The religious cult of the Phœnicians doubtless exercised a profound influence over the religious beliefs of the Sikans and the Elymians who occupied the western portion of the island.

When the Greeks came they brought with them a long line of deities that were wor-



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shipped in the parent country, and they readily adapted the gods and demi-gods already established on the island to their own needs. St. Paul, as we are informed in Acts xxvii. 12, tarried at Syracuse three days on his way to Rome, and he probably brought to Sicily the first teachings of the Man of Nazareth.

Christianity did not make rapid headway in Sicily; it did not become general until the time of Constantine, and it was the sixth century before it became the universal religion of the island. In the long struggle between Rome and Constantinople, Sicily sided now with the Roman Catholic church and now with the Greek Orthodox; but with the coming of the Normans Rome triumphed.

The Mohammedan religion was established in Sicily with the coming of the Saracens; and during the two hundred years that they occupied the island it was the established religion, so far as there was a state religion, although all other faiths were tolerated. The Norman kings were tolerant to the followers of the Prophet of Mecca after they had conquered the island; but the Spanish Bourbons recognized but one religion — that of Rome — and the Holy Inquisition made quick work of the Mos-

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lems who had lingered after the Norman conquest.

For a period of eight hundred years the church of Rome had a monopoly of the religion of Sicily, since the activity of the Holy Inquisition made it too uncomfortable for other denominations to get a foothold. Convents and monasteries multiplied with extraordinary rapidity and a fifth of the land of the island was soon in the hands of the church. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, in a population of a million and a half, two hundred thousand men and women were in the monastic orders vowed to celibacy. Since 1860 many of the convents and monasteries have been closed by the government and new foundations — unless for education or the care of the sick — have been forbidden.

The Roman Catholic religion is nominally the established religion of Sicily, as it is the dominant religion; but since the expulsion of the Bourbons, the clergy have been subordinated to the civil authorities and freedom of worship has been guaranteed to the adherents of all other religions. The women of Sicily are generally pious and observant of religious duties, but the younger men are distinctly anti-

clerical, although not necessarily anti-religious.

The piety of the lower classes, however, has degenerated into a superstition that approximates the paganism which once was the dominant religion of the island. Many of the religious anniversaries suggest to the traveller forms of paganism from which they may have originated. The names have been changed. We no longer hear of heathen gods, but the saints take their place. St. Michel displaces Apollo, Santa Lucia at Syracuse takes up the tasks of Artemis, and St. Nicholas supersedes Poseidon. But the character and the circumstances are practically what they were in pagan days, and the unlettered worshippers have changed little the spirit of their pagan forebears.

“The worship of Almighty God,” remarks Professor Deecke, “is far less important in the popular belief than that of the Virgin and the different saints. The consciousness that these are in reality only intercessors is almost entirely lost, and they are prayed to as if they themselves could give fulfilment to prayer. If one saint does not hear, they turn to another, often bestowing regular insult on the former

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patron and removing the picture from the wall. Each saint has his special function, so that every vocation in life has its protector in heaven. Santa Lucia helps in the case of sore eyes, St. Lazarus in that of burns, Santa Rosalia at Palermo in that of accidents, and all have the power of performing miracles, with the representations of which all the churches and chapels are adorned.”

I called the attention of several ecclesiastics to the fact that the saints and their pompous celebrations occupied a much larger place in the religious life of Sicily than of any other Roman Catholic land that I had visited; but it was generally urged in defence of the practice that the Sicilians apprehended religion through their senses, rather than through their reasoning powers, and that the gorgeous ceremonies and processions to which I referred were necessary for a people who craved spiritual food in a passionate and sensuous shape.

Santa Lucia is the saint of Syracuse and the surrounding country. She was born of wealthy parents and endowed with almost angelic beauty—a fatal gift in those wicked pagan times. Without her knowledge or consent she was betrothed to a wealthy young pagan noble-

man. Now Lucia had abandoned the faith of her parents and accepted the Christian religion. As the mother was on the point of forcing her daughter to wed the nobleman, she was stricken with a mortal malady; but Santa Agatha came in a vision and told her that if she would annul Lucia's marriage contract she would restore her to health. This the afflicted mother was willing to do, but the young man in question would not consent to the revocation of the bargain. He still loved Lucia and he swore that her beautiful eyes haunted him day and night. To spare him this annoyance Lucia, according to her biographer, "cut her eyes out of their sockets and sent them to him, begging that henceforth she might be left in peace." But, adds the same pious narrator, "God rewarded her for her sacrifice by restoring her eyes an hundredfold more beautiful than ever."

The lover then went to the pagan ruler of Syracuse and represented that in accordance with an edict of Diocletian Lucia should be compelled to sacrifice to the gods. Accordingly, a warrant was granted; but, instead of taking her to a temple, the young pagan took her to a brothel, where her superhuman



STATUE OF SANTA LUCIA AT SYRACUSE.

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strength prevented him from defiling her. She was thrust into prison and subsequently sentenced to death on the charge of refusing to worship the pagan gods. But when the soldiers attempted to remove her to the place of execution " she stood as if rooted to the ground and they could not move her. Even when ropes and pulleys were applied they proved powerless. A fire was kindled about her in her cell, but that too did her no harm. Finally a soldier stabbed her."

A church was erected on the spot where she suffered martyrdom. There she was buried. But a wicked Greek — General George Maniaces — subsequently removed her remains to Constantinople; and before the good people could get them back to Syracuse some crafty Italians from the north had taken some of them to Venice. Portions of them, however, were brought back to the city of her nativity and they repose in a side chapel of the cathedral at Syracuse. Once a year they are escorted with great pomp to the church of Santa Lucia, where they originally reposed, and on sundry other occasions they have wrought great cures and accomplished truly miraculous works for the good of the city. Over the high altar in her



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church is a painting ascribed to Caravaggio; the pillar to which she was bound while in prison is in the church, and in the old baptistery is a recumbent marble figure of the saint by a pupil of Bernini. In the transition from paganism to Christianity Lucia took the place of Artemis as the protectress of Syracuse.

Santa Agatha, already referred to, is the ruling force at Catania. She likewise had the fatal gift of beauty. One Quintilian who was a ruler of Catania — her biographer says he was king — was so excited by her resplendent beauty that he wished to make her one of his concubines; and with this thought in mind, he sent her beautiful gifts. But as Agatha had embraced the Christian faith in her infancy, she rejected his proposals and returned his gifts. Angered that she should refuse the attentions of so powerful a person, he ordered her thrust into prison and he required the jailer to tear out her breasts with red-hot pincers; “but in the night St. Peter and an angel visited her and restored her breasts and healed her with celestial ointments.” She finally died in prison in the year 253.

General George Maniaces, if the monkish chroniclers of the mediæval period are to be

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believed, had a passion for the remains of maiden martyrs, for he carried her body to Constantinople with that of Lucia. Many years later Agatha appeared in a vision to a Catanian priest and commanded him to go to Constantinople and fetch her remains back to her native city. He forthwith obeyed the summons; and, after diligent search, he found the body. But consent to remove it was not forthcoming; so he cut the body up in small bits and bribed a force of returning soldiers to secrete the pieces in their quivers and return them to Catania, where they are still kept in a silver reliquary in the cathedral of that city. To be quite accurate I should state that when they attempted to put the pieces together they found that one of the breasts was missing; but this, to quote from the biographer to whom I am indebted for this information, was subsequently "found and brought back by a little girl, so that the blessed Agatha is now, to the confusion and shame of infidels, as whole as she ever was."

At her great festival during February each year, the relics of Santa Agatha are carried through the streets of Catania by men in white robes, followed by the civil authorities, the

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ecclesiastics, and the pious people of the city. The veil which covered the saint in her martyrdom is regarded by the devout as an infallible remedy against the destruction of the city by the lava streams that sometimes issue from Mount *Ætna*. When the veil is spread out before a torrent of lava, so say the faithful, it has the power of arresting its progress or turning it in another direction. I regret to state that during the eruption of 1669 the veil did not prevent the destruction of the city and the harbour; but this failure was due to the fact that the people were momentarily in disfavour with the saint. But the wealth of votive offerings of gold, silver, and precious stones, all representing breasts, in the chapel of Santa Agatha in the cathedral at Catania, attests the persistence of the faith of the Sicilians in the power of Agatha.

At the western end of the harbour of Palermo there rises from the plain a huge bare cliff that recalls the rock of Gibraltar. It is Monte Pellegrino, the seat of the shrine of Santa Rosalia, the patron saint of Palermo. Rosalia was the only daughter of a noble family claiming descent from the great Frankish king Charlemagne. She was educated in the

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refinements of her period; but, as she was pious and took no interest in the social doings of her family and friends, at the early age of twelve years she fled from her home in the city to a cave on the summit of Monte Pellegrino, and there she passed her years in acts of devotion and penance.

But her pious life was ignored by the worldly people of Palermo; and when she died no one bothered to give her a decent burial. Four hundred and fifty years after her death (1624), a terrible plague visited the city. Thousands of people perished. During its progress a soap-maker, whose wife had died from the plague, climbed to the summit of Monte Pellegrino to bewail his fate and implore the Almighty to join him with his beloved companion. He was suddenly encountered by a beautiful woman. And when asked who she was she replied that she was Rosalia. She deplored the fact that her remains had not been given a Christian burial; and she commanded the soap-maker to tell his confessor that if the people of Palermo would come for her bones and carry them through the city that the plague would disappear. She furthermore assured the soap-maker that four days later he

would join his departed wife in paradise. The deposition of the soap-maker was taken down by a priest in the presence of two Capuchin monks; and, as prognosticated, just four days later he was taken ill and died within an hour.

The bones of Rosalia were at once brought to the city; and, at the head of a grand procession, they were carried through the streets. "As soon as this was done the plague began to diminish; and it ceased entirely when the precious bones had been taken through all the streets of Palermo." It was ordained that a great festival should be celebrated yearly in honour of the saint. This festival is held from the 11th to the 15th of July each year and is accompanied with horse races, regattas, fire-works, and other demonstrations in her honour; and on the night of the 4th of September a great torch-light procession composed of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities and the pious folks of the city climbs the almost inaccessible precipice by a well-paved zig-zag trail to her grotto on the summit of Monte Pellegrino. The grotto has been converted into a chapel, adorned with a statue of the saint that is covered with gold, and the precious relics are



SHRINE OF SANTA ROSALIA ON MONTE PELLEGRINO.

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guarded by a brotherhood of monks. Near-by on a picturesque brink of the summit stands a colossal effigy of the saint which has been twice beheaded by lightning. It is a seamark for mariners who are expected to cross themselves and invoke the protection of the saint when they pass it.

In the ill-fated city of Messina it was the Virgin herself who assumed the rôle of protectress. When the news of the conversion of the pagans of the city to the religion of her Son came to her, she wrote to the Messanese from her residence in Jerusalem a congratulatory letter, which became the palladium of the city and worked miraculous cures and drove out devils. The letter, it should be stated, was written in Hebrew; but for the better understanding of the inhabitants St. Paul turned it into Greek. Through the negligence of someone the letter was lost, but a monk who recalled its contents made a transcript in Latin which the faithful of the city believed to be the original. A magnificent high altar in the cathedral, costing seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars, was erected as a receptacle of the precious epistle of the *Madonna della Lettera*.

Each year on the 3rd of June, the day the



forged letter was dated, it was carried in triumph through the streets of Messina; and in August, in honour of the Assumption, there was another great festival. An English traveller who witnessed these extraordinary festivals during the last century wrote: "The pomp commences with a train of nobles and city magistrates with their insignia of office and decked in their most splendid habiliments; then follow the military, both cavalry and infantry, with banners flying, to the sound of martial music; next come the fraternities of monks and friars, a motley crew, black, white, and gray, bound round with knotted cords and loaded with relics and crucifixes; these precede an immense car, equal in height to the very tops of the houses, which totters as it is dragged along with ropes by many hundreds of cattle in the shape of men. The crowds that follow are innumerable, from town and country. The lower story of the movable tower is embellished with hangings of rich silk and velvet, forming an imaginary sepulchre for the Virgin; it is filled with a band of musicians and a choir, who chant solemn dirges over the body of the deceased. Twelve youths, with brazen glories on their heads, encircle this

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tomb externally, to represent the twelve apostles: round them a circular frame carries, with a horizontal motion from right to left, several little children attached to it, in flowing robes and painted wings, to support the character of angels. Upon the platform of the second story stands a company of prophets chanting the Madonna's praises; and in front of this prophetic choir a large image of the sun, revolving with a vertical motion, carries round six infants affixed to the ends of its principal rays, and styled the cherubim; six more on the other side perform similar revolutions upon a figure of the moon. The third story is decorated with a tribe of singing patriarchs, around whom a circular frame moves horizontally from left to right, with a train of seraphim. Over the heads of the patriarchal family is fixed a large sphere, painted sky-blue, and figured with golden stars; little winged infants flit around this, under the denomination of 'moving intelligencies' or 'the souls of the universe'; upon the sphere itself stands a damsel of fifteen or sixteen years old, decked in embroidered robes glittering with spangles, in the character of our Saviour; and in her right hand, stretched out and supported by machinery, she holds a beau-

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tiful child, who represents the soul of the blessed Virgin.”

This rather extended quotation from the writings of Thomas Smart Hughes gives some notion of the spectacular nature of the ceremonies which accompany the celebrations that the Sicilians hold in honour of their saints; and when it is recalled that there are eighty-eight such celebrations each year, it will be seen that the enormous cost in the loss of working days and the expense for fire-works and decorative trappings are distinctly prejudicial to the economical welfare of the island. Considering the ignorance of the Sicilians, the traveller marvels at their apparent familiarity with so large a repertoire of saints. And as each saint has his or her distinct attributes, symbols, and colours, I was told that it was not uncommon for peasant women when they came to shops to buy cloth to ask for Santa Lucia green or Holy Father brown. Most devout Sicilian parents name their children for the saint whose day the birth of the child celebrates.

The Greek Catholic, or Orthodox church, as it prefers to be called, has a few congregations at Palermo and elsewhere. Its clergy marry and it does not recognize the authority of the

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Roman pontiffs. The Greek priests stand better in their respective communities than their Roman colleagues; for the lower orders of Roman Catholic priests in Sicily, it must be said with regret, enjoy indifferent reputations for piety, learning, and morality. Some of the gibes against the Sicilian clergy that one hears daily are not quotable in a work of this sort. Professor Deecke remarks in this connection: " In spite of its great influence the clergy does not enjoy great respect. This holds especially of the lower ranks of the clergy, who are badly paid, frequently getting only twenty cents for the daily mass from some endowment, and eking out a miserable subsistence with writing letters and the like. The ' prete ' is still a favourite object of jokes and allusions with double meanings, just as he was in the time of Boccaccio, and he turns up again and again as a ludicrous figure in the comic papers. He is looked on as a kind of parasite who does not work, but lives on the work of others, and even sometimes a harbinger of misfortune, for it is looked upon as a sign of approaching death if a priest is the first person encountered in a new year. In addition to this, these people, owing to their poverty, often possess only

shabby worn-out canonicals, and having no one to look after them at home, are often very dirty.”

After the Roman Catholics the Waldensians have the strongest following in Sicily. Before the religious freedom which came to Italy with the expulsion of the Bourbons and the absorption of the States of the Church, the Waldensians were confined to three small mountain valleys in northern Italy — the Pellice, the Angrona, and the Germanico. They are a very old body of Christians, and for thousands of years they braved the persecutions of the established church. For centuries they led a separate existence apart from the life of Rome. Their remoteness, their poverty, and their comparative unimportance as a people protected them from outside interference for a long time; but as the Roman church extended its power and acquired an insatiable desire for uniformity, it turned its attention to the mountain valleys in the north; and for eight centuries the Waldensians encountered persecutions that are probably unexampled in the history of religion.

But the Waldensians shut up in their almost inaccessible valleys were able to persist in

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spite of the thirty armies sent among them by the Holy Inquisition from the twelfth to the eighteenth centuries. As early as the year 1096 Pope Urban II describes the Waldensian valleys as infested with heresy. In 1243 Pope Innocent ordered the Bishop of Metz to organize an army against them. Sometimes they were under the kings of France and sometimes under the dukes of Savoy, but change of rulers or change of popes made little difference. The agents of the Holy Inquisition, soldiers, and brigands plied the brand and the sword with little interruption and ravaged and pillaged the Waldensian communities. But they survived and to-day represent the highest social standards found in the united kingdom. Illiteracy is nowhere in Italy so low as in the Waldensian communities.

The Waldensians came to Sicily with Garibaldi; and in the past half century they have made great progress on the island. They have churches at Palermo, Syracuse, Catania, Vittoria, Caltanissetta, and Pachino, and they had a flourishing congregation at Messina. They also have mission churches at Barcellona, Licata, Girgenti, Trapani, and at other points. In many of these places they have schools. The

creed and organization of the Waldensian church are not unlike those of the Presbyterian and Congregational churches. Both the Methodist Episcopal and the Baptist churches of the United States have begun the work of evangelization in Sicily and already have organized churches at a number of points.

## CHAPTER XI

### EDUCATION IN SICILY<sup>1</sup>

**Intellectual conditions in Sicily at the time of unification — High rates of illiteracy under the Bourbons — Its decrease since 1860 — Sicilian children naturally bright — The school laws — Nature of elementary education — The school studies — Obstacles to progress — Normal schools for the training of teachers — Secondary schools — Importance attached to classical learning — Neglect of technical education — The universities and higher education — Their organization — Preponderance of law students — Connection of the university professors with the literary life of the island.**

WHEN the coveted unification was an accomplished fact, the Marquis Massimo d'Azeglio remarked, " We have made Italy, we must now make Italians." And the young kingdom set itself to the task with a zeal that is worthy of a large measure of praise. It has blundered unmistakably. With an average of a new minister of public instruction every year since unification, policies have necessarily been varying

<sup>1</sup>For a fuller account of the school system see the author's *Progress of Education in Italy*. Annual Report of the United States Commissioner of Education for 1906. Washington, 1907.



and inconsistent. Money has been lavished on the army, and the elementary schools have been forced to eke out a pauper existence. Nevertheless, the kingdom is two centuries ahead of where she was when she took up the arrears that came to her from the Bourbons and other governments that loved darkness.

At the time of the expulsion of the Bourbons from Sicily, more than ninety per cent. of the people could not read or write. Great changes have taken place since that date and substantial progress has been made. There has been a decrease of illiteracy among the young of about thirty per cent. School attendance has increased one hundred and twenty-one per cent. An elementary education of three years — and more recently six — has been brought within the reach of all children, although it has not been made sufficiently compulsory to compel all children of school age to profit by it. Institutions for the training of teachers have been established, and school supervision has been provided.

Adult illiteracy is still alarmingly great on the island. The latest statistics that I have been able to obtain refer to persons who are unable to write their names at the time of mar-

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riage. Illiteracy is lowest in the province of Palermo — forty-five per cent. for men and sixty-one per cent. for women — and highest in the province of Girgenti — seventy per cent. for men and eighty-three per cent. for women. This is very much higher than on the peninsula. In northern Italy, where it is lowest, only four per cent. of the men and six per cent. of the women are unable to write their names.

The Sicilian children are naturally quick of apprehension, and the extension of the franchise has stimulated the desire for an elementary education; but I was repeatedly told in Sicily that probably not more than half the children of school age attended any kind of school. This statement was not difficult to believe, because of the large number of young people seen at all hours of the day on the streets engaged in begging. Of more than a dozen young men, ranging in age from fourteen to twenty, whom I engaged as local guides, I found only one that could write his name. There may be a grain of truth in the retort of a Sicilian prelate, that, “while the young people of the island cannot read and write, they can tell good pictures from bad ones.” It nevertheless holds true that an elementary education,

such as is given in most of the countries of Europe, does contribute materially to general efficiency and standards of living. And this training at the present time is not given to a very large number of the growing youth of Sicily.

The Casati law of November 13, 1859, which followed in the train of the battle of Solferino, forms the basis of the elementary school code of Italy. It decreed that education from the sixth to the ninth year should be secular, gratuitous, and obligatory. It did not, however, make adequate monetary provision for the maintenance of the elementary schools, and it failed to impose penalties upon parents who neglected or refused to send their children to school. The Coppino law of July 15, 1877, imposed upon recalcitrant parents an ascending scale of fines, from 10 cents for the first offence up to \$2. The decrees of February 16 and December 25, 1888, formulated the course of study; and the law of July 8, 1904, has fixed the compulsory school attendance period at six school years, or rather the completion of a six-year school course, for all communes of more than 4,000 inhabitants.



AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

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Every town of seventy children between the ages of six and twelve years is supposed to maintain a school for boys and one for girls. Smaller communes may unite with neighbours. Communes of less than five hundred inhabitants may have mixed school, although the sentiment against co-education is so general that the mixed school rarely exists. The studies in the elementary schools are prescribed by the national government rather than by the local authorities. The course includes the mother tongue, the elements of arithmetic, writing and composition, geography, drawing, nature study, and moral culture. Domestic science may be taught in girls' schools and manual training in the schools for boys. As a matter of fact, however, there is very little training along industrial lines in the elementary schools of Sicily. It is much needed—particularly courses of a primary sort in agriculture, horticulture, and allied subjects. The new regulation of the past year, however, contemplates important changes in the character of the school work in the primary grades; and, with the adoption of the contemplated reforms it is hoped to better adapt the present

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scheme of elementary education to the needs of the children.<sup>1</sup>

Religion is not an obligatory study, although parents have the right to claim school instruction in the catechism for their children. In spite of the great homogeneity of the creeds of Italy — for practically all Italians are Roman Catholics, if they are anything — the catechism is taught in less than three-fourths of the schools, and there is a marked annual decrease in the number of schools where religious instruction is given. In some instances the religious instruction is given by the regular teachers, but in many cases the communes employ the parish priests to take charge of the catechism classes.

The real obstacle in the way of progress in elementary education in Sicily is the lack of funds. The Italians are the most heavily taxed people in Europe. The annual tax for all purposes is more than fifteen dollars a head. Everything is taxed — the necessities as well as the luxuries of life; yet only a pittance of the enormous tax fund gets into the educational budget. And the elementary

<sup>1</sup>For the recent modifications of the elementary school course see: *Regolamento generale per la Istruzione elementare*. Palermo, 1908.

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schools of the kingdom get less than one-fourth of the money assigned to the ministry of public instruction. An undue burden is also placed upon the villages and towns in the matter of providing school funds, with the result that these schools are often poorly equipped and directed by teachers who have not been adequately trained for the work. The pay of the teachers is very small and the training in consequence is abbreviated.

The monastic ideal has not the foothold in Sicily that it has in other parts of the kingdom; and the people, if they believe in education at all, favour the public schools. But there is everywhere lacking that widespread faith in the influence of an education that is so essential in countries where compulsory laws are so inadequate as in Sicily. I was told that the returned emigrants from the United States were the warmest advocates of elementary education. They had been brought in competition with the common school trained labourers from other countries and had recognized their own deficiency as compared with the emigrants from other countries. The public letter writers of Sicily indicate how keenly the need of improvement in elementary education is. Let-



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ter writers are often found in the sheltered places of the cities and towns earning a pittance by conducting the correspondence of the illiterate. They are usually people of some education who have failed in business.

The system of normal schools is by no means a bad one, but the teachers in the elementary schools are poorly paid and their tenure of office is insecure. The teachers are appointed by local boards, but such appointments must be approved by the educational council of the province. The government fixes minimum salaries and provides that these shall be augmented ten per cent. for every six years of service until the salary has been increased four times. As teachers, however, must hold the same post three consecutive years before they are deemed permanently appointed, and thus eligible to the increase, boards of education evade the law by giving quittance notice at the end of two years. They may turn the teachers adrift or employ new ones, or they may reappoint them under a new agreement, and thus not have to make the sexennial ten per cent. increase.

The island is better provided with efficient secondary than with elementary schools. At

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least the classical end of the secondary education is proportionately stronger than the primary education. But in Italy, as in France, secondary education is regarded as the exclusive privilege of the aristocratic classes. The secondary schools, however, are unduly occupied with the study of the ancient languages and they give altogether too little attention to the modern side of education. There are two broad subdivisions of secondary education: (1) Classical secondary schools and (2) technical secondary schools. The latter are in no sense institutes of technology, but scientific high schools.

There are two divisions of the first — the gymnasium and the lycée. Pupils enter the classical schools at the age of eight or nine years, although they are supposed to have the equivalent of a primary course in the mother tongue. The course of study in the gymnasium includes the Italian language and literature, Latin, Greek, French, mathematics, and a bit of drawing and natural science. The gymnasium trains for minor posts in the civil service and fits for the lycée. The lycée is an institution for the continuation of the classical studies and a fitting school for the univer-

sities. Its course is three years; and in addition to the classical studies it gives a little history and philosophy. But as the course is customarily completed by the sixteenth or the seventeenth year, little instruction requiring maturity can be given. The lycées are supported jointly by the state and the towns. The state pays the salaries of teachers and furnishes the necessary appliances and the communes erect and maintain the buildings. The gymnasia, on the other hand, are largely maintained by the towns, with supplementary subsidies by the state.

The high esteem in which classical education is held results in an overcrowding of the professions with men who, at this stage of their education, should be diverted into technical, industrial, and commercial occupations. The secondary schools are crowding the ranks of the intellectual proletariat at a time when Sicily is demanding more scientific farmers and skilled workers. The secondary education of girls, what there is of it, is still largely in the hands of the religious congregations, and is of an exceptionally elementary character.

The technical side of secondary education in Sicily is weak. Such schools, so far as they

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exist, give instruction in the Italian language and literature, French, geography, arithmetic and geometry, bookkeeping, drawing, and the elements of science. There are a few special schools of technology on the island, such as the technical and nautical school at Trapani and the school for mining surveyors at Caltanissetta; and it is education of this sort that a poor country like Sicily stands in such pressing need.

There are three universities in Sicily, including the one recently destroyed at Messina. That at Catania is the oldest, having been founded in the fifteenth century. It has a student body of nearly twelve hundred and a teaching force of a hundred, including professors, extraordinary professors, and tutors (*professori pareggiati*). There is a special clause in the constitution which provides for "the study of Greek, as well as Latin and the other liberal arts." The clause relating to Greek was probably due to the survival of the Greek rite and language in Sicily at the time of its foundation by Alfonso the Magnificent in 1444. The university has a library of one hundred and thirty thousand volumes and twenty thousand pamphlets.

The recently destroyed university of Messina dates from the year 1548. It had a student body of seven hundred and fifty and a teaching force of about eighty. There were faculties of medicine, law, science, philosophy, education, and pharmacy, with a university library of thirty-six thousand volumes. A large number of the professors perished in the recent earthquake-disaster, including the distinguished writer on philosophy and pedagogy, Professor Giovanni Dandolo.

Palermo, the youngest of the Sicilian universities, is the largest. It has a student body of more than thirteen hundred and a teaching force of a hundred and forty. All the faculties are represented. The university library is the largest in Sicily — one hundred and sixty-five thousand books, thirty-four thousand pamphlets, and fifteen thousand manuscripts. The city library at Palermo is even larger, containing two hundred and sixteen thousand books, twenty-six thousand pamphlets, and thirty-two hundred manuscripts. The courses at Palermo take high rank among the universities of Italy and in a number of important departments its professors stand at the head.

The universities require attendance of four

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years for the degrees, although in medicine and surgery six years are required. The sessions are short — from the middle of November to the middle of July — and there are vacations at Christmas, the carnival, Easter, and Whitsuntide. Upon the completion of the university courses there are both oral and written examinations, and essays and theses are required. The latter, however, are not printed. Students pay no fees except for admission and final examinations, the salaries of the professors being paid by the government. Remuneration, however, is very small. The work of the instructors is light — not more than three hours a week being required — and most of them supplement their small salaries by literary or other labours.

Fully a third of the university students in Sicily are in the faculties of law. This is widely recognized as bad for the country. The number of lawyers who cannot find work in their profession is very large, and they greatly augment the large office-seeking army which demands to be fed from the public crib. "Wherever there is a vacancy in the civil service," says one of their writers, "there is a host of competitors, even when the place of-

fers the most niggardly salary. This unfortunate class of proletarians weighs heavily upon the social balance of the nation because it is a truly unproductive class." Many of the graduates in jurisprudence enter public or business life; but for the latter purpose technical and commercial courses would unquestionably give a better fitting. But a certain aristocratic air still clings to the law faculty and this draws unduly large numbers of young men into this line of university study.

Some of the most eminent literary and scientific men of Sicily are engaged in teaching. Professor G. A. Colozza, well known to American and English students of philosophy and education, and one of the most distinguished pedagogical writers of Italy, holds a chair in the university of Palermo. His authoritative works on the psychology and pedagogy of play have been translated into several foreign languages. Through his teaching and writings he has influenced beneficially all recent Sicilian educational reforms.

Professor Antonio Salinas, director of the national museum at Palermo, is professor of archeology in the same institution. Besides

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his numerous writings on archeological subjects, he has superintended the most important excavations that have been made on the island in recent years. He has also made the most important contributions to the history of the aboriginal races of Sicily — the Sikans, Sikels, and Elymians. It is to Professor Salinas that we are indebted for the recovery of the fine metopes of Selinus.

Professor Ernesto Basile, the architect of the new national parliament house at Rome, and of other important buildings in Italy, is in charge of the courses in architecture at Palermo. He completed the imposing Teatro Massimo at the capital and the largest theatre in Italy begun by his father, also a distinguished architect. Several important public monuments in Italy have been designed by Professor Basile. Two of the first men of letters in Sicily are also university teachers — Professor Mario Rapisardi at Catania and Professor G. A. Cesareo at Palermo. Luigi Capuana, the novelist and writer of tales for children, is also a member of the faculty at Catania. Sicilian professors take an active part in the political life of the island; and some of the



younger men, like Professor Francesco Orestano and others, are identified with the newer educational movements already referred to.

The chief learned society of Sicily is the Academy of Science, Letters, and Fine Arts at Palermo. It has three divisions — (1) Mathematics and Science, (2) Moral and Social Science, and (3) History and Philosophy. Each section has twenty active members, twenty collaborateurs, and twenty corresponding members. There are also learned societies at Catania and in several other cities.

The Alpine Sicilian Club, with a membership of eight hundred, and headquarters at Palermo, has been active in certain lines of educational work. It has established headquarters at the deserted fort of Il Castellaccio on the lofty heights above Monreale. Yearly school excursions under the auspices of the club are conducted on trips through the mountain. The club is also active in promoting out-door sports of an educational character and encouraging various forms of physical training. Professor Francesco Orestano, the moving spirit in the club, has been unusually successful in cooperating with the schools and other educational institutions.

## CHAPTER XII

### AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY, AND COMMERCE

**Agriculture the mainstay of the island—Its early introduction—Primitive methods of farming—Evils of the latifundia system—Wheat the chief agricultural product—Culture of herbaceous plants—Vineyards and the wine industry—The citrus fruits—Loss of the American lemon market—Other fruits and nuts—The sulphur industry—Character of the miners—Account of a sulphur mine—Rock and marine salt—Fisheries—Manufactures—Tanneries—The Sicilian donkey carts—Maccaroni and flour—Commerce—Railways and roads.**

**AGRICULTURE** has been the mainstay of Sicily since its introduction by the Sikels more than three thousand years ago; and, while the island is no longer the granary of Italy, as it was during the Roman period, nevertheless, the masses of present day Sicilians are entirely dependent upon the products of the soil. Ceres is fabled to have taught the aborigines the art of agriculture. Unfortunately the people have not progressed very much beyond the rudiments of the science which the beneficent goddess imparted during the mythological period.

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The soil is as rich to-day as in earlier times, and it would produce as abundantly as when the Greeks and Romans were masters of the island, if agriculture were only carried on scientifically.

The plow in use to-day is as rude as in Virgil's time; fertilizers, if not absolutely unknown, are not employed; and when the fields will no longer produce, they are simply allowed to lie fallow for a year; the land is in the hands of large proprietors who live in the cities; it is sublet to middlemen who rent it to peasant farmers on short leases; the peasants are characteristically ignorant; and, without intending to misuse the soil, they soon exhaust it. The peasant farmers, instead of living on the tracts of land that they rent and cultivate, reside in the cities and towns. They go to and from their work at the beginning and end of the day or week in little donkey carts. The donkeys are turned loose to board themselves and the men live in miserable straw shacks where they are badly protected from inclement weather and where they are forced to prepare in crude and unhygienic ways their simple and scanty food. The children, who should be utilized in the work of the farms, spend their time in the



**ABODE OF NON - RESIDENT FARMERS.**

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cities and towns begging. Poultry, vegetables, and other food commodities that might be produced at a farmstead are bought, if they are had at all. The men are with their families at most at nights only; and, as many of the farms are miles from the towns, only Sunday is spent at home. From the moral as well as from the economic standpoint the practice is as bad as it well could be.

But the system known as *latifundia*, the ownership of the land by non-resident proprietors, is the chief factor in the agrarian problem of Sicily. Estates have been inherited through many generations, and the only visible connections which the owners have with the land is the annual check from the middlemen with whom the sub-letting of the soil has been placed. Neither proprietors nor middlemen manifest the slightest interest in the improvement of agricultural conditions; and the peasant farmers, who represent the very lowest scale of civilization, are too ignorant and too impoverished to take the initiative. An English economist well says of the Sicilian farmer: "Treated like a beast, by the landlord or middleman, and repaying him with a sullen hate, housed in a windowless and floorless cottage,

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where human beings and donkeys and pigs share the only room in horrible promiscuity, so poor that he often marries his daughter for bread at twelve or fourteen years, generally malaria-stricken, quite illiterate, and steeped in superstition, brutality, and vice that can hardly find its like in Europe."

The government has done altogether too little to uproot the pernicious *latifundia*. A beginning might have been made some years ago when the vast ecclesiastical estates were seized. But too many of the farms were offered for sale at the time of confiscation, and the policy of the government, apparently, was to get what it could and spend as quickly as it could the money obtained from the lands of the monasteries and convents. Too many estates were thrown on the market at once; and instead of being bought up by the poor people, and thus creating many small and independent farmsteads, they were bought up by wealthy landlords and rich ecclesiastical organizations. For a country so densely populated as Sicily, it is only by intensive methods of agriculture that a decent living can be extracted from the soil; but intensive methods of agriculture are not compatible with the *latifundia* system.

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Wheat is the chief agricultural product. It is a hard variety and is largely used in the manufacture of macaroni. Less than twelve bushels to the acre are produced, as against thirty bushels in France and Germany, and with a distinctly richer soil than is found in northern Europe. But the methods of farming are too backward, no use is made of manures, and the Sicilians know nothing of the rotation of crops. I have seen large fields that were being plowed by men with ordinary picks. Imagine the yield from wheat fields prepared in this manner! Some rice is grown on the lowlands about Catania and Syracuse; but a good crop is produced not oftener than once in three years and the dangers from malaria are very great, hence the profits are very small.

Among the herbaceous plants that are cultivated are saffron, flax, and hemp. During the civil war in the United States, cotton was largely grown in the southern districts of Sicily, but the industry has nearly vanished in recent years. The vineyards of Sicily are both numerous and widely scattered, although the best wines are produced on the western coast of the island and on the slopes of Mount *Ætna*. The Marsala and Zucco wines bring the best



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prices and are largely sold in the English market. They are produced chiefly in the vicinity of Marsala and Trapani. The Mascali and the Terreforte wines, produced on the lava slopes about *Ætna*, also find large sales in foreign countries. In addition to these four well-known brands, ordinary wines for domestic consumption are produced everywhere. The vine flourishes as high as three thousand three hundred feet above sea-level. The sherry wine industry at Marsala dates from the closing years of the eighteenth century, when the Messrs. Woodhouse, an English firm, established their plant here. In the beginning of the last century another English firm—the Ingham-Whitaker Company—began operations; and in 1831 Signor Florio organized a third wine company. While the best wines are still produced by the firms at Marsala, the industry has spread to other parts of the island. The diseases which recently attacked the vineyards resulted in great loss to the already impoverished people.

The fruit industry of Sicily is also consequential. Agronomically the island may be divided into three zones: (1) The marine, or lemon belt, from sea-level to fifteen hundred feet; (2) the middle, or orange zone, from

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fifteen hundred to three thousand feet, and (3) the forest belt, above three thousand feet. Altitude, however, is not the primary determining factor in the range and character of the orchards of Sicily. Those demanding different quantities of moisture readily adapt themselves to lower and higher zones in a climate so equable.

The principal groves of the citrus fruits are to be found on the northern and eastern coasts, where the mountains rise in bold headlands to the sea, and at the bases of which are narrow strips of land of a loose, sandy character. The soil of the hillsides is less favourable because of the presence of clay; and in the southern and western parts of the island there are certain mineral substances in the soil that are deleterious to citrus fruit trees. Two-thirds of the Italian exports of lemons and oranges come from Sicily.

The yield of lemons per tree in the province of Catania is from a thousand to twelve hundred; in Syracuse from nine hundred to a thousand; in Messina from eight hundred to a thousand, and in Palermo from a thousand to eleven hundred. The lemons are entirely picked by hand so as not to injure the small

fruit and the new blossoms. A third of the lemon crop is now used in the manufacture of citrate of lime, because of the loss of a large part of the American market. Lemons yield the largest returns from the soil. The yield per acre in a good season is not much short of two hundred dollars. This represents a large profit, since the ground rent, annual depreciation, and cost of irrigation, fertilizing, spading, and pruning combined do not amount to more than fifty dollars an acre.

Since the United States has grown to depend so largely upon California lemons, Sicilian growers have made an effort to have the crop mature in the summer, when the demand for the fruit is greatest and the prices highest. To bring about this result, the orchards are not irrigated during the summer, the top roots are uncovered, and the trees are allowed to dry up. In the early autumn, the roots are fertilized and re-covered, and the trees are plentifully watered. By October they show great vigour; they are in blossom in November, and the fruit ripens in July. The treatment, strange to say, does not seem to impair the vitality of the trees.

Formerly the Americans purchased the bulk

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of the Sicilian lemon crop. To-day Russia is the largest buyer, the United States comes second, Germany third, and Great Britain fourth. But a third of the crop must now be used in the manufacture of citrate of lime and the essence of lemon. The essence of lemon is made from the peel. For the manufacture of citrate of lime the winter crop is largely used together with the windfalls and those discarded from the sortings of the summer crop. Sicily produces the world's supply of essence of lemon and citrate of lime, but the latter fluctuates so much that the returns to the producers are always in doubt. A new law of June, 1908, centralized the sale of these products in a citrus fruit chamber (*Camera Agrumaria*); and all products not sold through the chamber are subject to a tax of from twenty-five to thirty per cent., whereas goods sold through the chamber pay only two per cent.

In parts of the island that are not easily irrigated, olives, almonds, carobs, hazelnuts, and chestnuts are grown. One is surprised to note the care bestowed on chestnut groves—more, in fact, than is given to apple-orchards in New England. Old trees are removed when they become barren and young trees take their

place. Grafting is also employed. The chestnut meal is one of the staple food products of the poorer people. There are few forests on the island. Small quantities of cork are produced; and there are some mulberry groves in the northeastern part which are cultivated as food for the silkworms.

Sulphur is the chief mineral commodity of the island. There are five hundred sulphur mines in Sicily; and before the recent depression, they employed thirty thousand men and represented an annual output of four hundred thousand tons. The use of pyrites as a substitute for sulphur in the manufacture of vitriol and the exploitation of vast deposits of sulphur in Louisiana have almost ruined the sulphur industry in Sicily. In 1905 the United States imported 83,201 tons of Sicilian sulphur worth \$1,522,000; two years later only 20,299 tons, worth \$356,000, were imported; and the American import is certain to decrease with the years. The production has greatly exceeded the consumption during recent years and this has lowered the price and forced the miners to work for starvation wages.

The sulphur is found in great quantities in the Miocene rocks in the provinces of Girgenti,

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Caltanissetta, and Catania. But the mines are not economically worked and only two-thirds of the sulphur in the rocks is extracted. The sulphur is brought from the mines in great blocks and is piled up in the open air where it is subject to manifold destructive atmospheric influences. It is then heaped up over the flames of a furnace which causes the stones to split and the melted sulphur to fall into moulds below; but a deal of the sulphur is wasted in this primitive way of extracting it.

The sulphur miners represent the lowest type of the Sicilian population. They are often recruited from the criminal classes; and they enormously increase the illiteracy, crime, and vice statistics of the island. They work on eight hour shifts; the men are paid from forty to sixty cents a day and the boys from ten to fifteen cents. The government has tried to prohibit young boys from working in the mines, but the law has been very generally evaded.

An English writer gives the following account of his visit to a sulphur mine at San Cataldo near Caltanissetta: "On our arrival the fumes of the burning sulphur were terrible; the air was filled with it unless we got to the windward of the furnaces; and the nearly nude

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figures of the men swarming about the pit's mouth gave a vivid realization of the old idea of Hades. There was no cage wherewith to descend into the lower regions, but a flat board on which we stood, and slowly, very slowly, we sank down into the darkness, a scent of sulphur pervading the shaft; but we soon left the thick fumes of the furnace above us, and seemed to sink into purer air. At last we halted and stepped into a great vault, from whence led narrow, dark, grooved passages. From these issued gleams of light, thin smoke, dull booms of explosions, and low groans as of men in agony. It was curiously weird, but we went on through a low tunnel and came out into a vaulted chamber, where were groups of nude figures lit up by flickering candles and little lamps. They were round a line of little trucks filled with the ore, one piece I picked off a truck being almost pure rock sulphur of a light gold hue. A little further we penetrated into this strange scene, the scent and sounds and sights of which were as the Inferno, save no flames issued around us, and up little passages in the rock above us we saw men boring and blasting. And now we knew whence came the sad groans, for as they bored and drove home



**MARINE SALT WORKS AT TRAPANI.**



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the borers, they groaned as though in agony of spirit. The little boys also who bear the sulphur to the trucks as they creep along groan, and this gives the strange effect of misery and anguish that so adds to the effect of the scene."

An obligatory syndicate for the control of the sulphur of the island was established by the Italian government in 1906, and to this syndicate the Anglo-Sicilian Sulphur Company was forced to sell its stock of sulphur. But, as it seems quite impossible for Sicily to compete with the United States, the sulphur industry of the island is practically doomed.

There is an abundance of rock salt in the same formations where sulphur is found; but most of the salt of commerce of Sicily is obtained from swamps on the eastern and western coasts. Trapani and Augusta are the chief centres for the production of salt, and they carry on a brisk trade with Norway and other northern countries. Quantities of pumice stone are produced on the Lipari islands. Sicily also produces antimony, jasper, alabaster, amber, and agates, the latter being found in the river bed of the Achatas, from which they take their name.

The fisheries of Sicily are limited. The huge tunny fish of the mackerel tribe are caught in

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great quantities, the principal fisheries being on the small islands. Some of them weigh as much as a thousand pounds. They are packed in tin cans with oil and form an important article of commerce. They also form a staple meat diet for the common people, as the shoals arrive in early summer; and their close red flesh is less affected by hot weather than other fish. The sword-fish are harpooned in quantities in the Straits of Messina and are much esteemed as an article of food. There are some sardines and anchovies caught on the coasts, and considerable quantities of coral in the regions of Trapani and Syracuse.

The manufactures of Sicily are unimportant. Attention has already been called to the manufacture of the citrate of lime and the oil of lemon. In the production of the essential oils of orange, lemon, and bergamot Sicily leads. The United States imported during the past year more than a million dollars' worth of these oils from Messina, to say nothing of large shipments to Great Britain, Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, and eighteen other countries. The recent destruction of Messina had an immediate effect in increasing the price of these oils.



A SICILIAN CARRETO.

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There are many tanneries on the island and considerable manufacture of leather goods, chiefly cheap shoes, gloves, and the highly decorative donkey harness seen everywhere in Sicily. Mr. Douglas Sladen truly remarks: "The Sicilians are Oriental in their ideas of harness. On festa days their horses and asses have a horn a yard high surmounted by a plume of scarlet feathers and another great plume of scarlet and green feathers on their heads. The harness is mostly scarlet, ornamented with brass and little pieces of mirror. The pack-mules, whose harness is generally of webbing decorated in this way, look as if they were a part of a circus."

Quantities of the *carretti*, or two-wheeled donkey carts, are also manufactured. These vehicles, like the harness, are wonderfully decorated. The body of the cart is about four feet broad and five feet long and the wheels fit into the old chariot ruts of the Roman days with marvellous exactness. In spite of their diminutive size, it is not uncommon to see a *carretto* loaded with a dozen children and adults. The carts are very costly, being built of oak wood, which is often beautifully carved, and covered with hammered metal-work and fres-

coes. The history of the island is often epitomized on the sides of these small vehicles. Sometimes there will be a variety of scenes, such as the crucifixion of Christ on the dash board, a collection of Greek deities on the sides, and a group of dancing ballet girls on the rear. Landscapes, the saints, dragons, fruits, and flowers also figure in the brilliant frescoes of the Sicilian donkey carts. They are expensive vehicles and are handed down as heirlooms from father to son.

Formerly the bakers and macaroni makers ground their own flour by hand; but during recent years a large number of flour-mills with modern machinery have been established. Small quantities of silk are manufactured at Catania and some exceptionally artistic furniture at Palermo. There is also considerable cutting of amber and coral; and the art of cutting cameos on shells was invented by Giovanni di Anselmo, a native of Trapani, where the industry has flourished for many years. The thin shells used in the making of the cameos are found on the northern coast of Sicily.

The commerce of Sicily with the United States is considerable. Besides the lemons and sulphur, which we are importing in diminish-

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ing quantities, almonds and olive oil are largely imported. Sicily buys of the United States large quantities of wheat, which is mixed with Sicilian and Russian wheat and ground into semola for the manufacture of macaroni. Besides the agricultural and industrial products already mentioned, Sicily has a relatively important export trade in manna, derived from a species of ash, sumac for use in dyeing, cochineal, licorice, and saffron.

Palermo is the most important commercial city. It is connected by rail with the different sections of the island and it has several steamship lines connecting it with Europe and Africa. The chief exports are fruit, sumac, wine, oil, and sulphur. The recently-destroyed city of Messina ranked second. Its railway connections were similar to those of Palermo; but it surpassed the capital in the number and importance of its steamship facilities, being on the highway between Europe and the Orient. Its commerce was considerably augmented by the opening of the Suez canal. Catania carries on a brisk trade in cereals, sulphur, cotton, wine, fruit, and almonds. Syracuse has steamer connections with Malta and some trade in wine, grain, and oil. Marsala, on the west-



ern coast, is the centre and point of shipment of an important sherry wine industry, and Trapani exports salt, coral, shell-cameos, and alabaster works. Porto Empedocle, the port of Girgenti, handles a sixth of the Sicilian export of sulphur and has a large grain trade.

The island is reasonably well supplied with railways, having in all a little over seven hundred miles. Barring a stretch of fifty miles between Girgenti and Campobello, and the rocky angle in the northwest between Castellamare and Trapani, the outer coast is encircled with railways. There is also a line which crosses the island between Catania and Palermo, lines from Palermo to Burgio and Trapani, from Syracuse to Caltagirone, from Caltanissetta to Licata, and a line which circles Mount *Ætna*. The steamship traffic of the island is in the hands of the *Navigazione Generale Italiana*. It has the bulk of the coasting traffic and lines that connect with India, Egypt, and the mainland of Italy.

The public highways of Sicily leave much to be desired. Those which are used as coach routes have improved greatly during recent years; but the byroads are little more than donkey trails. In many parts of the interior

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the empty river beds are used as highways during most of the year. The postal system is as efficient as in the rest of Italy, but that does not say much for it. Telegraph and telephone offices are reasonably abundant.

## CHAPTER XIII

### SICILIAN LITERATURE

The Golden Age of Sicilian letters the Greek Period — Stesichorus and lyric poetry — Sicilian poets who wrote in the Dorian dialect — Theocritus and pastoral poetry — Nature of his art — Greek poets who sojourned in Sicily — Simonides and Pindar — Aeschylus and Epicharmus — Decline of letters during the Roman period — The Saracen and Norman renaissance — The Sicilian dialect — Folk-songs — The barren Bourbon period — Meli and the revival of poetry in Sicily — Rapisardi and his dramas — Capuana and juvenile literature — Sicilian romance writers — Giovanni Verga and Federigo De Roberto — An account of their writings — Cesareo — Teacher, critic, and poet — His lyric poems and dramas — Nature of his art.

THE Golden Age of Sicilian letters is the period in the remote past when the Greeks controlled the island. Sicily was the home of pastoral poetry, and the lyric art song and other forms of composition attained degrees of development at Syracuse not inferior to the literary art development of Athens and the other centres of culture in the parent country. Likewise choral songs, peculiar to the Dorians, attained high degrees of perfection among the Dorian colonies in Sicily.

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Stesichorus (632-560 B. C.), the earliest of the Dorian lyric poets and the greatest, was born at Himera and died at Catania. He was a contemporary of Sappho, Alcaeus, and Phalaris, and he is named by the ancient literary critics as one of the nine leading lyric poets of Greece. They mention twenty-six volumes of poetry by Stesichorus, and Quintilian says that "he would have been worthy to have been placed by the side of Homer if he had been more moderate and less diffuse." He is reputed to have been struck blind for a poem against Helen of Troy, but "on being informed by the Muses of the cause of his blindness, he wrote a recantation in which he declared that Helen never went with Paris to Troy, but that Zeus and Hera deceived her lover by a phantom, which he bore away with him thither. Then Stesichorus regained his sight."

He wrote poems on the exploits of Hercules, the funeral games for Pelias, a hymn of praise to Apollo, the story of Actaeon and his dogs, the hunting of the Calydonian boar, and the incidents of the Trojan war. Unfortunately only thirty short fragments of his poems remain, but in these, as Quintilian notes, "he achieved as a lyric poet the work of an epic

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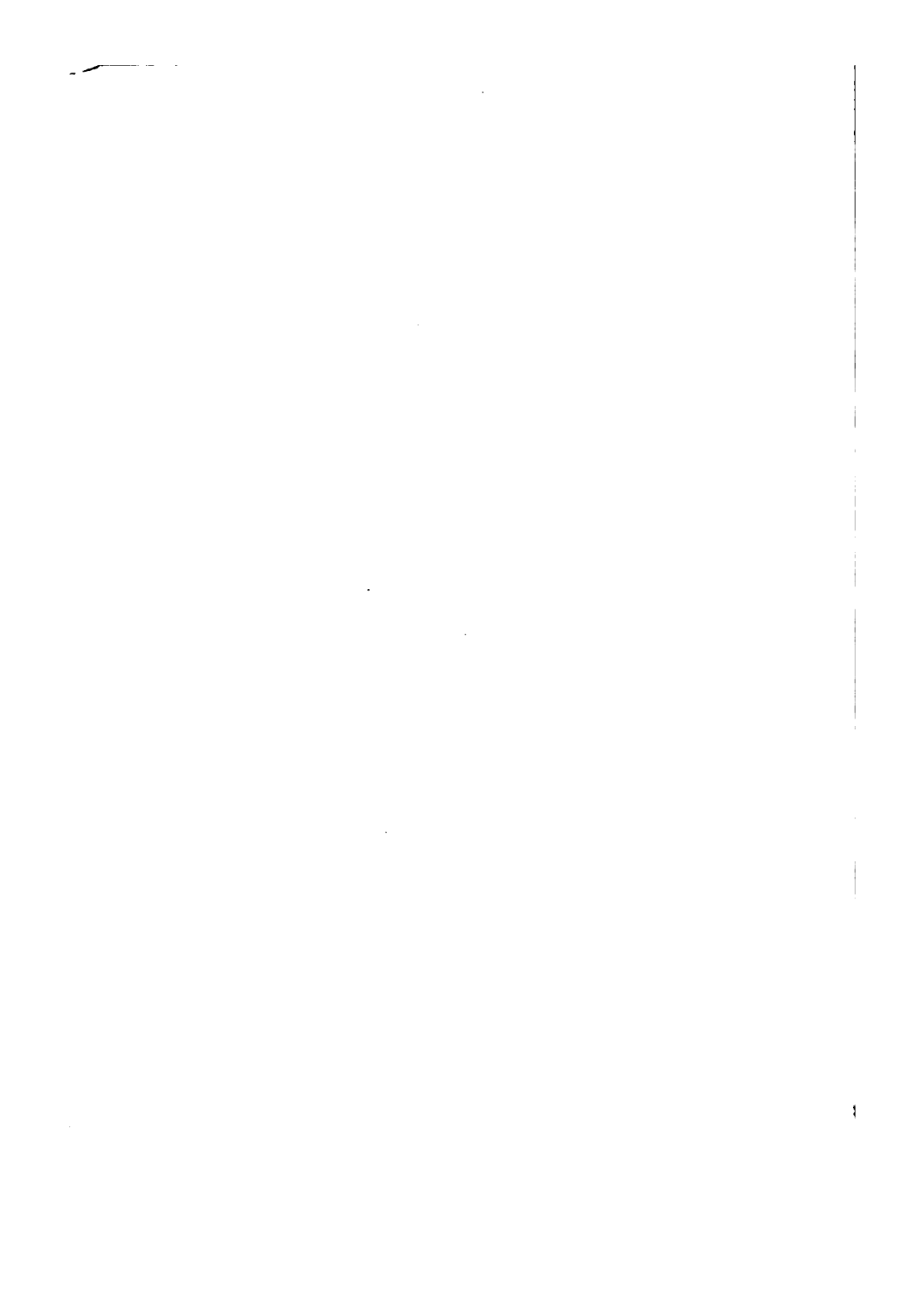
poet." His language was said to be a mixture of Doric and Ionic and his metre was chiefly dactylic. "The poems of Stesichorus," remarks a literary historian, "were sung in theatres by whole choirs and at banquets; they generally treated of tales connected with the heroes of lower Italy and Sicily."

Ibycus and Aristoxenus were also Sicilian poets who wrote in the Doric dialect. The latter is generally regarded as the founder of the school of dramatic poetry, and he is said to have been the first writer to employ the anapaestic metre. Legend relates that Ibycus was killed by robbers near Corinth, and as he was breathing his last some cranes flew over him. He called upon them to avenge his death. At a subsequent meeting of the assembly, cranes hovered over the heads of the people, and one of the robbers exclaimed, "Behold the avengers of Ibycus." In this way the perpetrators of the crime were discovered. Sophron, who was the first to introduce prose comedies at Athens, was also a Sicilian, and it will be recalled that his mimes were greatly admired by Plato.

But the greatest of the Sicilian poets was Theocritus, the founder of the school of pastoral poetry. He was born at Syracuse in



AN IDYLL OF THEOCRITUS.



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315 B. C., spent his boyhood at Alexandria, but returned to his native country for his manhood and mature years. His poetry to-day stands unexcelled for its fine sensibility, keen imagination, and realistic portrayal of hills, fields, and brooks. "Except that the Romans imprisoned the streams and fountains in aqueducts and that the forests have gone," remarks Mr. Douglas Sladen, "he might have been writing about the countryside of to-day, so truthfully do his idylls describe what the traveller sees, even to the goatherds playing on their reed pipes."

Undoubtedly the idylls of Theocritus give us the only extant account of the peasant life of Sicily during the Greek period; and, as has been remarked, he does not affect refinements for his shepherds and herdsmen, but gives a distinctly realistic picture of manners, customs, and scenes as he saw them. In his admirable account of Sicily in fable, history, art, and song, Mr. W. Copland Perry remarks: "It may seem singular that this series of idylls, faithfully portraying the rude and simple life of rustics, should have been produced in an age of the highest culture, by a man of the greatest intellectual and social refinement. The shep-



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herds of Theocritus are by no means ideal men; they are neither more handsome nor more virtuous than the ordinary shepherd. But the objectivity of his delineations, the truth and loveliness of his descriptions of the beauties of nature, the skilled way in which he develops the natural character of the simple denizens of the fields and the hills, make his idylls the most perfect in any age or language. Nor can we be surprised that the idylls of Theocritus were received with delight and applause by the wealthy and luxurious society of Syracuse and Alexandria. The contrast which they present to the exaggerated and sickly refinement of the pleasure-loving crowd of those gay and dissolute cities was peculiarly adapted to gratify the jaded taste of the tired votaries of Bacchus and Venus. Theocritus, too, was a man of the world, accustomed to the life of brilliant courts, was just in a position to appreciate the character and delights of the pastoral life which his vivid imagination and his unrivalled poetic art enabled him to portray in the truest and liveliest colours. It is not the rustic or mountaineer who feels most deeply the charms of green pastures and wooded hills and murmuring brooks, but the tired and sated

dweller in crowded and noisy cities, from which nature is expelled.”

Besides the native Sicilian poets, many of the first singers of Greece came to live at the courts of the island rulers and to sing of the beauties of Trinachria and of the life of her people. Arion and Sappho, the founders of the school of lyric art song in Lesbos, the modern Mitylene, enjoyed the hospitality and the protection of Sicilian tyrants. Sappho, according to Ovid, resided at the seat of Aphrodite, the modern Palermo, and Arion, according to Herodotus, was a favourite among the Sicilians, his dithyrambs reminding them of “their own merry rustic songs.” Theognis, the poet of the aristocratic clergy in Greece, who was exiled from Megara, received honours and citizenship in the new Megara.

Simonides of Ceos (556-467 B. C.), one of the first Greek lyric poets as well as a graceful writer of patriotic elegies and triumphal odes, lived many years in Sicily, first at the court of Theron at Akragas and later at the court of Hieron at Syracuse. He placed a large monetary value on his poetic effusions and was characterized by his rivals as a miser and a niggard. He was wont to say that he kept his

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rewards in two separate chests — in the one the praises which his poems received and in the other the gold which his royal patrons paid him; and that when he found the former empty, he always found the second a convenient resort. Because of the extraordinary memory which remained with him in his advanced years, he is generally credited with being the inventor of the system of artificial rules for memory training known as mnemonics. A competent critic says of his poetry: “ His style was remarkable for its sweetness and the high polish which he bestowed upon it. Though inferior in originality and fire to Sappho, to Alcaeus, and to Pindar, none of the Greek lyric poets were more popular than he.”

Pindar (521-441 B. C.), the prince of lyric poets, was four years at the court of Hieron, and many of his great odes were recited in the theatre at Syracuse. In the force of his metaphors, the majesty of his style, the richness of his imagery, and the strength of his originality, among the great poets of old and new Greece, Pindar stands in a class by himself. His Olympian odes were so highly esteemed that the Rhodians had them inscribed on the walls of their temples in letters of gold.

But "Not all the triumphs recorded were gained at the four great Hellenic games. Some songs were written for great victories in Sicilian contests; though the rulers and wealthy men preferred to appear at the great Panhellenic festivals. Their victories gave occasion for splendid banquets, at which the services of poets and musicians were required; and on such occasions the odes of Pindar were sung by well-trained choirs to the accompaniment of the cithara."

Aeschylus (525-456 B. C.), the father of Greek tragedy, made two visits to Sicily — the first at the invitation of Hieron I of Syracuse when he resided for some time at the newly founded city of *Ætna*, on the slopes of the Mount of *Monts*, and the second to Gela where he spent the last two years of his life and where his remains were interred. All his great tragedies — the *Persians*, *Prometheus Bound* and the trilogy of *Orestes* — were performed in the Greek theatre at Syracuse. Indeed, some critics hold that the *Persians* was performed for the first time at Syracuse. Aeschylus was undoubtedly the greatest dramatic poet that Greece produced. His powerful imagination gave great reality to his treatment of nature,

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legends, and man; and in the profundity of his religious sentiments and the broad philosophic views which he held, he was quite as great as a thinker as a poet. While in Sicily he wrote his play "The Women of Ætna." According to tradition, he met his death while taking a walk near Gela — an eagle flying over him and mistaking his bald head for a stone, let fall a tortoise it wished to smash. The people of Gela erected a splendid monument in memory of the great dramatic artist, upon which they inscribed some of his own verses. But "no mention was made of the lasting fame he had won as a poet, but only of his prowess at Marathon, of which he is said to have been prouder than of his unrivalled poetic genius and art."

Epicharmus (540-450), although born on the island of Cos, was taken to Sicily in his infancy, and comes, therefore, very near being a native. He was the author of thirty-five comedies, the high esteem of which are attested by Plato, Aristotle, and other ancient writers. He was not only a voluminous writer of comedies of rare merit, but he was also reputed a philosopher of great wisdom. "The aim of Epicharmus," writes Mr. Perry, "was to ridi-

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cule his countrymen under the figure of mythological personages. His mythological plays were, in fact, parodies which were very popular in Magna Græcia. For example, in his 'Busiris,' Hercules, after killing the king of Egypt, who sacrificed strangers, rewards himself for his labours by a rich banquet, at which he is introduced as a voracious glutton, as in the satirical dramas. . . . At the wedding of Hebe, a magnificent banquet on Mount Olympus is described, of which fish are a prominent feature. Poseidon has been told to bring a large cargo of fish in Phœnician ships. At the banquet table, Zeus takes a large costly fish for himself and his consort. Athene is made to play on the flute, to accompany the war dance of Castor and Pollux, the same flute which she once threw away because Aphrodite ridiculed the distortion of her face while she was blowing it. The Muses are represented as fishwives, bawling out in favour of their wares."

Learning declined during the Roman period, and the island did not again shine in letters until the time of the supremacy of the Saracens. At the luxurious courts of the Arab emirs at Palermo men of letters and science were congregated as at the courts of Hieron at Syra-

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cuse and Theron at Akragas — philosophers, writers, and travellers who spoke and wrote in Arabic, Greek, and Hebrew. The Mohammedan mosques were seats of learning or of learned societies; libraries were founded, and the writings of Aristotle and the Greek philosophers studied with zest. The Saracens were also interested in the study of science and the development of scientific literature — travel, medicine, astronomy, chemistry, and mathematics.

The Normans, who succeeded the Saracens in the control of Sicily, were also patrons of letters; and although they were identified with the religion that had banished Greek and Latin literature from the study halls because the authors were pagans, nevertheless, the tolerance of the Norman kings made possible the continuance of the literary spirit which had returned to the island with the Saracens. Keen interest was manifested in the developing Sicilian language, as represented by the troubadours, at the court of William II, and this interest culminated in the reign of Frederick II, who practised the art of verse-making and encouraged in diverse ways the literary use of the vulgar tongue.

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Mr. John Addington Symonds, the brilliant historian of the renaissance in Italy, believes that the mediæval conception of government, nature, art, and letters might have disappeared several hundred years before it did had the Norman kings been permitted to continue the rule of Sicily. He remarks in this connection: " While the north of Italy was deriving the literature both of its cultivated classes and the people from France, a new and still more important phase of evolution was preparing in the south. Both Dante and Petrarch recognize the Sicilian poets as the first to cultivate the vulgar tongue. with any measure of success, and to raise it to the dignity of a literary language. In this opinion they not only uttered the tradition of their age, but were also without doubt historically correct. Whatever view may be adopted concerning the formation of the *lingua illustre*, or polished Italian, from the dialectical elements already employed in local kinds of poetry, there is no disputing the importance of the Sicilian epoch."

Through the wear and tear of daily use and the lack of the study of its literature, the Latin language in Sicily was displaced by a dialect, as was the case throughout the disintegrated



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Roman empire, in spite of the powerful efforts of the church. The Sicilian dialect, as a matter of fact, differs less from the literary Tuscan than most of the peninsular dialects. A number of Greek, Arabic, Spanish, French, and German words are employed in the Sicilian; words are often clipped; *u* frequently takes the place of *i* at the end of words; *b* is sometimes changed into *v* and *l* into *r*; *n* followed by *d* changes to *nn*, and there are other minor changes. But on the whole the Sicilian dialect varies less from the literary Italian than the other dialects of the kingdom.

Moreover, the Sicilian lends itself excellently to poetry, and the folk-songs of the island are quite equal in grace and delicacy to those of Tuscany. An English authority says of the Sicilian folk-song: "It has furnished a rich literary material to the popular imagination for six hundred years down to our own day, and yielded a harvest of genuinely popular poetry not equalled elsewhere in the world. Not in their numbers alone are the Sicilian folk-songs pre-eminent, but in their intrinsic poetic excellence. The love-songs especially are tender, passionate, and sincere, and many have a penetrating pathos that haunts the memory

of the reader." Many volumes of Sicilian folk-songs, ballads, and legends have been collected by Pitre, Linares, de Grazia, Vigo, and Salomone-Marino. Students of the Sicilian folk-songs are of the conviction that the airs to which the words are wedded are of Arabic origin.<sup>1</sup> Among the known authors who earliest attempted to write in the Italian in Sicily may be named Frederick II, Manfred, Enzius, Ciuillo, Petrus de Vineis, Guido delle Colonne, and Jacopo da Lentini. Fragments of these writers are found in the collections that Sicilian students of native folk-literature have made with so much zest and care.

Sicily did not measurably feel the effects of the renaissance which did so much for letters in Tuscany and northern Italy. In the university at Messina there was a spurt of enthusiasm for the new learning and toward the freer life which had been the charm of classic times. But the absolutism of the Spanish Bourbons did not look with favour upon a movement that questioned the mediæval dogma that God had ordained that the world should be ruled by di-

<sup>1</sup> For accounts of the Sicilian folk-songs and legends, see: Giuseppe Pitre: *Studi di leggende popolari in Sicilia e nuova raccolta di leggende Siciliane*. Turin, 1904, pp. 393. Also Vincenzo Linares: *Racconti popolari*. Palermo, 1886.

vinely appointed autocrats. In consequence of this attitude, and "corrupted and oppressed by the Spanish rule, the latter half of the sixteenth and all of the seventeenth century witnessed the decadence of Italian literature into mannerism, affectation, and bombast. The empty simplicity of the eighteenth century, with its 'Academy of Arcadia,' was not less depressing. Pretending to replace old conceits and pastoral simplicity, the Arcadians only attained to languishing tenderness, sexless effeminacy, and wordy barrenness."

Some historians and a few scientists and archaeologists were produced in Sicily during the Bourbon reign, but most of the men on the island with ideas were either exiled or imprisoned. This was the case with Michele Amari (1806-1888), the distinguished historian of the Sicilian Vespers, the Mussulman in Sicily, and other notable historical works. With the single exception of Meli, practically all the important Sicilian names in Italian literature date from the conquest of the island by Garibaldi. Rapisardi, the brothers De Roberto, Capuana, Verga, and Cesareo are young men and belong to our own day and generation.

The heritage of the pastoral poetry of Theoc-

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ritus and the dialectic folk-verses of the Norman period found expression in the eighteenth century in the Anacreonic songs and poetical satires of Giovanni Meli (1740-1815). Meli's verses have some of the simplicity and melody of Burns, without the Scotch bard's withering satire and tragic pathos. There is lightness, ease, and grace to his songs, and a genuine vein of humour characterizes such mock-heroic compositions as "Don Quixote" and "The Origin of the World." One of the most marked characteristics of Meli's poetry, remarks an English critic, "is its lively and dramatic character, arising from close observation of the national types, apparently just as they were observed by the ancient writers of Sicilian mimes."<sup>1</sup> Meli was not touched by the national spirit of his countrymen, and he allied himself too closely to the ruling Bourbons to develop whatever latent force of character with which he may have been endowed. His poetry is delicate and spiritual, remarks Charles Dejob, but it is characterized by prudence and timidity.<sup>2</sup>

Mario Rapisardi, who occupies the chair of

<sup>1</sup>Richard Garnett: *A History of Italian Literature*. New York, 1898.

<sup>2</sup>Charles Dejob: *La Litterature actuelle en Sicile*. Paris, n. d.

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Italian literature in the university at Catania, is the most considerable lyric poet which Sicily has produced in modern times. His earlier works included translations of the Odes of Horace, the *De Rerum Natura* of Lucretius, and "Prometheus Bound" by Shelley. His more recent works include such comprehensive poetic compositions as *Lucifero*, *Giobbe*, and *Palingenesi*, which are characterized by rare diction and marked power. He was educated in the monastic school at Aci Reale, but his memory of his teachers and the character of the religious instruction which they imparted is altogether uncomplimentary to the priests of the institution. He represents them as ill-mannered, foul-mouthed, gluttonous, brutal and debauched hypocrites. They taught that the earth did not move and they classed Jenner, the inventor of vaccination, among the heretics. In both *Lucifero* and *Giobbe* he treats of the persecution of heretics and of the grotesque follies of the saints in a manner not altogether pleasing to the devout. In *Lucifero* Saint Michele and Santa Caterina yield to the pleasures of the flesh and Santa Therese is represented as distinctly below the plane of mental health as the result of repeated attacks of hysteria. A less polemic

writer of verse is Luigi Giaraca, the young Syracusan poet.

Luigi Capuana, also a professor in the university of Catania, is a writer of graceful romances and pleasing stories for children. *L'Albero che parla* has all the charm of the fairy stories of Perrault. His ostensible purpose is to interest rather than instruct, but his rare imagination and the naïve charm which he gives to the personages in his tales, together with the repetitions of idioms and the unusual turns which he gives to words — devices which so rejoice the heart of the child — make his fairy stories the delight of the Sicilian young. Capuana has emulated Carducci's metrical experiments with extraordinary success. His most important novel is *Il Marchese di Roccaverdina*, which has been compared to Dostoievsky's *Raskolnikoff* in its psychological analysis of remorse. Yet passionate and lustful though the Sicilian may be, he instinctively veils the deeds of his intimacy, as Mr. Kennard has so well remarked. "The object of his love or lust is not transfigured into an ethical figure, nor worshipped with mystic incense, but kept jealously hidden from public view."

In the domain of romance Giovanni Verga

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and Federico De Roberto have taken high position as writers, not only in Italy but in those countries of Europe where the Romance languages are held in esteem. They rank with Italian novelists like Alexander Manzoni, Edmondo De Amicis, Antonio Fogazzaro, Matilde Serao, and Gabriele D'Annunzio.

Verga, who is a master of the short story, is best known to English readers through the dramatized version of his *Cavalleria Rusticana* which Mascagni set to music. It is, however, one of his less consequential stories. He has been a pioneer in his country in realistic fiction and has depicted with genuine artistry and keen realism the peasant and fisher folks of Sicily. A biographer says of him: "The tragedy of the sea, the poverty, the hardness, the sordid ideals, the petty gossip, and scandal of village life; the familiar types of the syndic, the reactionary priest, the republican apothecary, the returned conscript, Uncle Crucifix, the miserly money-lender — only those who know the life of a southern village can fully appreciate the art which brings this little world before us in such vivid relief."

One who would know the mental and moral characteristics of the Sicilian peasants at their



ONE OF VERGA'S FISHER - FOLK.



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worst and their best will find the romances of Verga a veritable ethnic encyclopædia. Mr. John Spencer Kennard<sup>1</sup> very properly remarks in this connection: "Having inherited those characteristics of the mixed Sicilian race — its fatalism and passivity, its quickness of wit and subtlety — he was in full sympathy with the rude, untutored, yet complex natures of his countrymen. Under the roughness of their manners, notwithstanding centuries of misery, and despite their low moral standards, he discerned nobility of character and sensibility for the grand and beautiful. No foreigner could have described the Sicilian with such loving perspicacity. And having ascertained the true art formula for his aptitudes, even Verga's failings have helped him to success. He could not write pure Tuscan Italian, his style was not classic, he had little humour, and less wit; but his short, abrupt sentences, his limited vocabulary, have enhanced the general effect by adding a more lifelike colouring, a stronger appearance of reality, to his representation of this rough life, and of the *naïve* ideas of his rustic heroes. He has dispensed with the trick

<sup>1</sup>John Spencer Kennard: *Italian Romance Writers*. New York, 1906.

of dialect because his simple, rude Italian preserves the very spirit of the speakers."

Verga's first work to attract general attention was the "Story of a Blackbird," an account of a girl cloistered in a convent and made mad by despair. "It is a homely tale, told simply, yet it suggests many complex emotions. Sympathy for the victim is not awakened by ranting denunciation; the nude reality suffices. Verga's Sicilians represent the iron law of the survival of the fittest. The people accept it all as fate: the master feels no remorse. Their resignation to suffering suggests Oriental fatalism, yet they trust their saints to reverse the decrees of destiny; they are kindly and hopeful." This passivity and fatalism in the Sicilian character is again admirably illustrated in *Vagabondaggio* ("The Tramps").

While he has won his chief laurels in his descriptions of the sordid life of the peasant village folks, in *Artisti da Strapazzo* ("Second-rate Artists") he has portrayed with marvellous fidelity the low life of the throbbing thoroughfares in a great city. Here, as in so many of his recent stories, he depicts, as Mr. Richard Garnett has pointed out, "with the fidelity of a dispassionate observer and the skill

of an artist. His books not only attract in their own day, but will be treasured in the future among the most valuable documents for the social history of Sicily."

The same qualities pervade *Malavoglia*, his most important novel, which deals with a group of Sicilian fishermen in an out-of-the-way village. Mr. Edouard Rod, who writes the preface to the French translation of this work, gives it very high rank among the best representatives of modern realism. "Not the gloomy, crude, pitiless realism of the French school, but a sanguine, vivid reproduction of life," remarks Mr. Kennard, "such as may be seen in Michetti's or Morelli's pictures. In works of fiction Verga best reveals this healthy disposition, because he has kept free from foreign imitation. Serenely objective, yet warmly sympathizing with the things he describes, he instills life and suggests a pantheistic spirit of love."

Federigo De Roberto is a Sicilian by education and long residence, although born at Naples. He is a novelist of the psychological type, but with an immeasurably larger fund of accurate scientific knowledge than is customarily possessed by writers of this school. He is also

a critic of rather large measure and his canons of his own art are distinctly interesting. In the preface of "The Tree of Knowledge" he writes: "The following sketches have been composed in observance with that artistic method which allows the greatest preponderance to the inner world of the soul, studies its alternate phases, investigates its phenomena, and unveils its actions and reactions. This method is evidently only applicable to a limited class of subjects. Since, where it is neither possible to peer inside the brains of other people, or to ascertain by any means what may be happening therein, the psychological investigator is reduced to imagining what he himself would feel were he in the situation he invents for his personages."

"The Viceroys" is probably De Roberto's greatest novel. In this he studies the evolution of the family in its relation to society. "In this vast picture of Sicilian life," remarks Mr. Kennard in his admirable résumé of the novel, "there is patient observation, accurate historical data, and penetrating analysis of character. This book also throws light on the customs of the south, answers many random charges brought against Sicilians, and when

the charge is true, presents the extenuating circumstances."

With reference to the charge of immorality, which has been brought against "The Viceroys," Mr. Kennard adds: "Though high principles and elevated questions may be seldom discussed, De Roberto never throws a glamour over wrong or makes wickedness beautiful. His pitiless descriptions of the consequences attending on wrong-doing are not an encouragement to vice, even though he presents no high motives for virtue. To a society so eager for the immediate satisfaction of its passions, so scornful of abstract morality as is the present generation in Italy, this matter-of-fact exposition of the advantages of virtue is an effective lesson." Both Federigo De Roberto and his brother Diego have made notable critical studies of Italian and French literature.

The most promising of the younger Sicilian writers is Giocami Alfredo Cesareo, who occupies the chair of Italian literature in the university of Palermo. Professor Cesareo was born at Messina on the 24th of January, 1864. He received his elementary and secondary school training in his native city and his university education at Rome and Palermo. While

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recognized as one of the first teachers of literature and literary criticism in Sicily, he is best known as a poet and a writer of literary criticism. It may be said, indeed, that he combines in an unusual way the best qualities of the teacher, the poet and the critic.

His earliest literary production was "Don Juan" (1883). Four years later he published "The Occidentalist" and "Heroic Adventures." In 1895 his justly celebrated volume of lyric poems appeared and two years later his dramatic version of the story of Francesca da Rimini; and a second volume of lyrics appeared in 1905 with the title "The Comforter." He published his first volume of critical essays in 1884; ten years later appeared a volume on Sicilian poetry under the Suabians; in 1899 his "Literary Conversations;" in 1902 his life and works of Leopardi, and last year (1908) a history of Italian literature. He has also contributed numerous essays on Petrarch, Dante, Ariosto, and the canons of literary criticism to the leading Italian reviews.

All his writings give evidence of a highly cultivated mind, an exquisite sense of art, a sensitive temperament, and a strong and active character. In addition to being a lyric poet



**GIOCAMI ALFREDO CESAREO.**



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of fine qualities, he is also a psychologist of considerable measure, as is indicated by his dramatic writings. Among his poems that have become favourites with the lovers of the art of the muses may be named "Tears," "The Flower," and "The Songs of the Cradle." In "Destiny," "The Two Souls," and "The Woman of the Dream" he has covered a wide gamut of poetic interests, including mental alienation, love, justice, and wisdom.

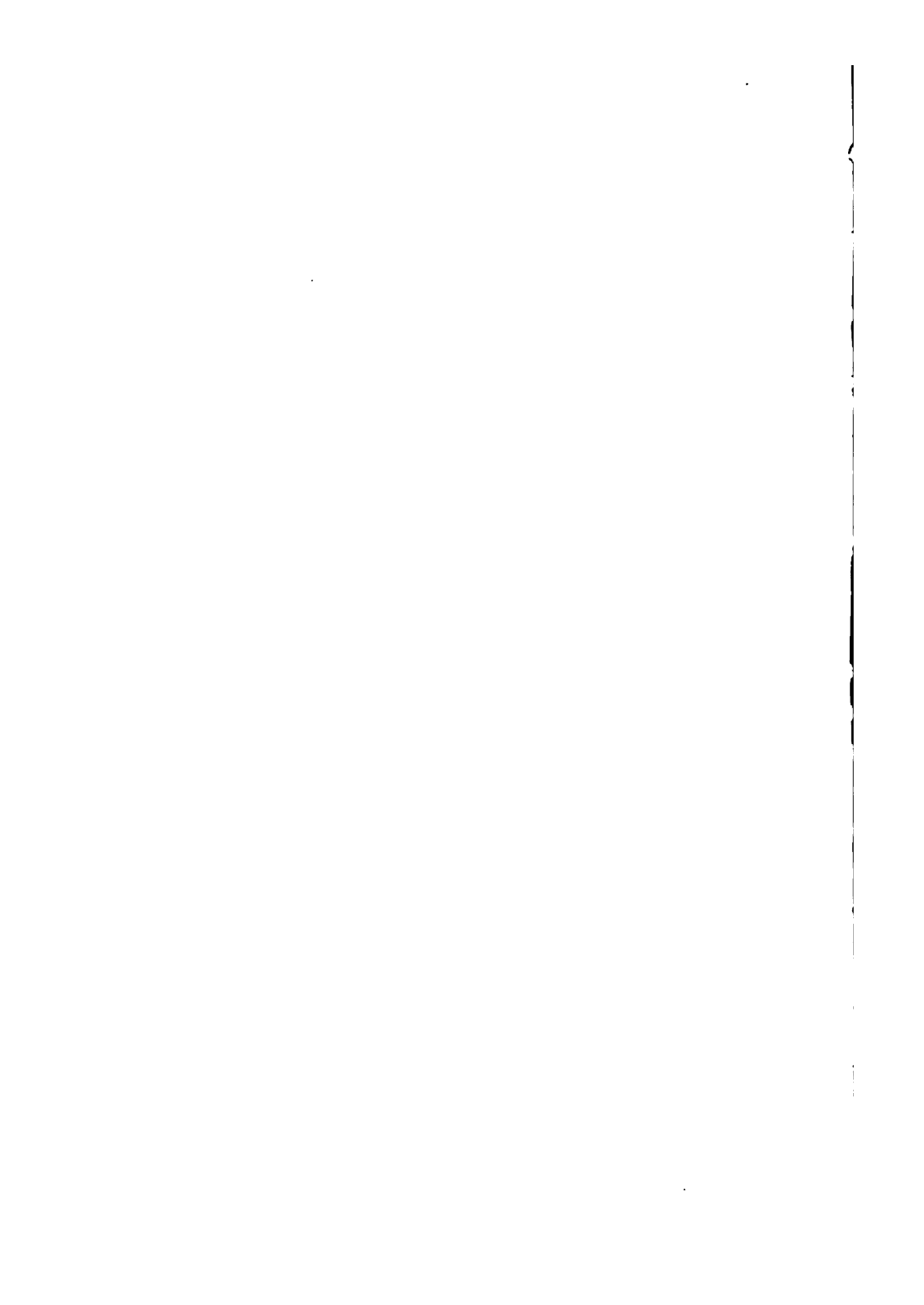
His literary development is easily traced through "Don Juan" and "Heroic Adventures," where we have what Matthew Arnold once characterized as the rich growth at the base of the daisy's stem, through the lyrics where the flower is just beginning to blossom in its white and golden hues, to "The Comforter," and in "Francesca da Rimini" we have the real inward character of the blossom. His muse, like the bride of "that son of Italy who tried to blow e'er Dante came," is attired in two costumes — an outer radiant garment of gayety and mirth and the concealed inner sackcloth of thought and austerity.

The public, which had admired so heartily "The Comforter," did not take kindly to the dramatic portrayal of Francesca da Rimini

when it was produced — not because the drama was not a work of art, but because of preconceived notions of the heroine of the play. Clearly it has only been because of lack of critical judgment that Cesareo's dramatic masterpiece has thus far not met with more general favour. Few have portrayed the haughty and domineering daughter of Guido da Polenta with keener psychological insight and finer artistry. Cesareo is still a young man; and with so much good work already to his credit, Sicilian literature is certain to be further enriched by his verses and essays.



ITINERANT MUSICIANS



## CHAPTER XIV

### MUSIC AND ART

Creative tonal art — Sicilian folk-music — Canzonnetta — Bellini — His early compositions — The Pirate — La Sonnambula — Norma — The Puritan — Bellini's last years — His place as a composer — Florida — Greek architecture in Sicily — The temple at Segesta — Architecture of the Normans — Cathedral at Cefalù — Sicilian sculptors — Gagini and Serpotta — Rutelli and the younger sculptors — Painting — The renaissance artists — Di Vigilia, Antonello da Messina, Romano, and Novelli.

SICILY does not occupy a large place in the history of creative tonal art. To except Bellini and Florida there are no names of distinction among the long list of Italian music composers. But the Sicilians are music loving and their folk-songs are both numerous and varied. The itinerant musician is a familiar sight on the island; the pipes of Pan are used to-day by the goatherds as they were at the time of Theocritus, and the Sicilian bag-pipe, like its Scotch counterpart, when heard at a distance, is not without a measure of enchantment. As already pointed out, the music to many of the folk-songs is doubtless of Arabic

See *Parisi*  
*Colonna*

rather than of Latin origin. Professor A. Favara of Palermo has recently issued a volume which gives the most popular of the Sicilian folk-tunes,<sup>1</sup> with the words in both the Sicilian and the Italian.

Best known is the Sicilian canzonnetta, a popular dance song in rondo form and somewhat like the jig. It is generally in 6-8 time and usually in the minor key. It has been extensively used in the slow movements of suites and sonatas by Bach, Handel, Meyerbeer, Pergolesi, and other composers. It remains, however, for Sicilian composers to utilize the rich folk-songs of their island as thematic material in sonata music as has been so successfully done in Hungary, Bohemia, Norway, Russia, and other European countries. Unfortunately the creative side of tonal art has had less encouragement in Sicily than in other parts of Italy.

Sicily's most distinguished composer is Vincenzo Bellini (1801-1835). He was the son of a prominent organist at Catania; and as he gave early evidence of music talent, a Sicilian nobleman persuaded his father to send him to the

<sup>1</sup> A. Favara: *Canti della Terra e del Mare di Sicilia*. Palermo, 1908.

famous Conservatorio at Naples. Here he was a fellow student of Mercadante; but as the instruction at the time was poor, he did not get the technical training which he so much needed. Indeed, Bellini never became a well-trained musician; he was a composer by instinct rather than by training. He devoted himself to the study of music-drama; and while still a student at the Conservatorio (1824), his first opera — *Adelson e Salvini* — was performed by the College of Musicians. Barbaja, the impresario, who at the time controlled the leading opera houses of Italy, thought the composition indicated promise and commissioned the young Sicilian to write an opera for the Teatro San Carlo at Naples.

In 1826 Bellini's *Bianca e Fernando* was produced at Naples, but it met with an indifferent reception from the public and was not kept in the répertoire at the San Carlo very long. The impresario, however, believed the piece had merit, and he asked Bellini to write an opera for the next season at La Scala in Milan. "The Pirate," with Rubini in the tenor rôle, was brought out in 1827, and it met with instantaneous success. In this opera he gave expression to the reaction which he felt for the

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florid style of Rossini, and the Milanese gave marked indications of their preference for the simple melodies of the younger artist. In this, as in the seven subsequent operas which Bellini composed during his brief career, he sought to bring Italian melody back to its pre-Rossinian simplicity and give it that dramatic warmth of expression which had been obscured by top-heavy ornamentation.

Milan produced his *La Straniera* the next season (1828) and Parma his *Zaira* in 1828. In 1830 Venice produced the operatic version of his *Romeo and Juliet*, which owed much of its success to the singing of Mme. Pasta in the soprano rôle. The next season La Scala at Milan produced his *La Sonnambula*, which is unquestionably his best work. Mme. Pasta sang the rôle of Amina and Signor Rubini that of Elvino. Its success was so pronounced that it was shortly produced in France, Germany, England and most of the opera houses of Europe. It was based upon a simple pastoral story but set with the most beautiful melodies. During the two brief acts there is an endless flow of the most exquisite melody,—peaceful, simple, and idyllic as the charming pastoral scenes which it illustrates.

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“Norma,” a serious opera in two acts with words by Romani, was produced at Milan in 1832 and in London a year later. The scene of the opera is laid among the Druids of Gaul shortly after its occupation by the Roman legions. At its first performance it was thought wanting in vitality, “though no opera was ever written in which such intense dramatic effect has been produced with such simple melodic force, and no Italian opera-score to-day is more lively or more likely to last.”

“The Puritan” was first given at Paris in 1835 with a cast of unexampled strength—Mme. Grisi, Rubini, Tamburini, and Lablache. In orchestration it surpassed his previous works, but the music was set to a very poor libretto that had been derived from a very poor French novel—Ancelot’s *Les Puritains d’Ecosse* (The Puritans of Scotland). As in his other operas, there is a wealth of choice melodies and much genuine pathos. The magnificent “liberty duet” for basses probably has no equal in the whole range of Italian opera for its majesty and dramatic intensity. The same may be said of the beautiful tenor solo in the closing concerted piece, which is thoroughly religious in character, and was sung

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at Bellini's funeral to the words of *Lacrymosa*.

While not a well trained musician, Bellini was a man of fine natural gifts, acute artistic perceptions, and extreme sensibility to nature. As a harmonist he was not distinguished — not that his harmony was faulty, but that he usually confined himself to the simplest and most natural progressions. He was content to remain within the limits of his powers and rarely attempted tasks that he was not fitted by training to accomplish. He looked for success to his rich melodic power and his remarkable skill in treating the human voice.

Bellini spent his last years at Paris, where his operas met with great favour. The extent to which the absolutist system of the Bourbons in Sicily was carried is indicated by their refusal to allow his remains to be brought from Paris to his native city, on the assumption that the event might arouse national feeling and augment the hatred of the foreign rule. They even prohibited the erection of a monument to his memory, the funds of which were to be raised by voluntary subscription. It was not until 1876 that his remains were interred with great pomp in the cathedral at Catania. The

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tasteful monument is by Tessara of Florence and is inscribed with this passage from *La Sonnambula*:

“ Ah, non credea miraclì  
Sì presto estinto fiori.”

In the principal public square of Catania (*Piazza Stesicoro*) there is a handsome monument to Bellini by the distinguished Roman sculptor Monteverde. It represents the composer in a sitting position and on the pedestal are figures which represent *Norma*, *Il Pirata*, *La Sonnambula*, and *Il Puritani*. In the Villa Bellina, a public garden in Catania named in honour of the composer, there is a handsome bust of Bellini. There is also a Piazza Bellini and the chief theatre of the city, where opera only is given, is known as Teatro Messimo Bellini. Thus the city of his nativity has sought to honour the memory of the greatest creative tone artist that Sicily has produced.

Of a half dozen young men in Sicily to-day engaged in creative tonal art, only one has attained any marked measure of distinction. Pietro Floridia was born at Modica the 5th of March, 1860. He received his early instruction from Sicilian masters and then studied for a

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time at Naples. His first important composition was a three-act comic opera entitled *Carlotta Clepier*. After its production he went into retirement for three years to work upon a more serious composition, which, when completed, he burned. For two years he taught in the Conservatorio at Palermo, but in recent years he has taken up his residence at Milan, the Mecca of Italian musicians. Besides piano pieces and a symphony in four movements, Floridaia has produced a grand opera in four acts — *La Colonia Libera*.

Sicily possesses some of the finest remains of ancient Greek architecture. The ruins of forty temples, most of which were of Greek origin, may be seen by the traveller; and those at Girgenti and Segesta are in a splendid state of preservation. At Syracuse there are no less than seven — the temple of Minerva, which forms a part of the present cathedral; the temple of Diana; the temple of Bacchus, lately excavated near the catacombs of San Giovanni; the Olympeium, near the Anapo river; the temple of Apollo above the theatre; the temple of Ceres and Proserpine, near the Campo Santo, and the Adytum, near the Scala Greca. At Seliunte there are the remains of eight tem-

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ples and at Girgenti nine. The church of Annunziata dei Catalani at Messina was a part of an old temple to Poseidon and the cella of the temple of Apollo at Taormina forms a part of the present church of San Pancrazio. At Aderno one may see the remains of the temple of Hadranus, sometimes called the temple of the Thousand Dogs. There are also remains of temples at Tyndaris, Castrogiovanni, Cefalù, Palazzolo, Solunto, Buonfornello, and Segesta.

One of the most beautiful of the Greek temples in Sicily is that at Segesta. It is located on a lofty eminence; behind it the rivulet Gaggera, called by the Greeks the Scamander in recollection of the famous stream near Troy; and beyond this the lofty summits of the primary mountain range. Goethe says of this lonely spot: "At the highest end of a broad and long valley, the temple stands on an isolated hill. Surrounded, however, on all sides by cliffs, it commands a very distant and extensive view of the land, but takes in only just a corner of the sea. The distance reposes in a sort of melancholy fertility—everywhere well cultivated, but scarce a dwelling to be seen. Flowering thistles were swarming with

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countless butterflies, wild fennel stood here from eight to nine feet high, dry and withered of last year's growth, but so rich and in such seeming order that one might almost take it to be an old nursery-ground. A shrill wind whistled through the columns as if through a wood, and screaming birds of prey hovered round the pediments."

In lonely sublimity the great travertine temple stands on a rocky eminence that is closed in on three sides by craggy mountains. The Greeks always placed their temples where the grandeur of the edifice might be heightened by the surrounding scenery. Here scenery and temple harmonize as nowhere in the parent country. A Sicilian archæologist pronounces it one of the most beautiful remains of Grecian art. "It is imposing without being clumsy, simple but not bare. There it stands in majesty and loneliness among the hills." It is a Doric temple that never was completed. Segesta was one of the oldest Greek cities in the western part of Sicily, but she quarrelled continually with her sister city Selinunte, and one of these quarrels proved the ruin of both cities.

It is a hexastyle-peripteral temple, with six



DORIC TEMPLE AT SEGESTA.



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columns in the front and rear and fourteen on each side. The thirty-six columns which form the peristyle rest on a stylobite of three steps, a fourth step having been hewn in the rock on which the temple stands. The entablature crowns the columns on all sides, and above it, at the eastern and western end, rise the two pediments. The temple, including the stylobite, is one hundred and ninety feet long, seventy-eight feet wide, and sixty-one feet high. The columns are unfluted, the steps of the basement unfinished, and the cella had not been begun. The temple at Segesta dates from the second half of the fifth century B. C.

After the Greeks, the Normans made the largest contribution to the history of architecture in Sicily. Their cathedrals and palaces are an unusual combination of Arabian and Byzantine styles adapted to the needs of the Roman Catholic religion. The cathedral at Cefalù is one of the most interesting ecclesiastical buildings of this period. It was begun by King Roger in 1131 as a votive offering for a safe return from Calabria after a most perilous voyage. It is in the form of a Latin cross and is intact in all its principal parts. It has nave, side aisles, and transepts, and three apses at the

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east end, but no central tower. The arches are pointed and the pillars — taken from ancient buildings — imitate the Corinthian. The walls are covered with mosaics after the Byzantine manner. In the semidome there is a colossal mosaic bust of the Saviour represented in glory and benediction between four angels holding the labrum. The face of Christ, like the portraits at Monreale and the Cappella Palatina, is distinctly Oriental in its features. Mr. Symonds has called attention to the superiority of mosaics over fresco as an architectural adjunct when employed on the gigantic scale that one sees at Cefalù. He adds: “Permanency of splendour and richness of tone are all on the side of the mosaics. Their true rival is painted glass. The jewelled churches of the south are constructed for the display of coloured surfaces illuminated by sunlight falling on them from narrow windows, just as those of the north — Rheims, for example, or Le Mans — are built for the transmission of light through a variegated medium of transparent hues. The painted windows of a northern cathedral find their proper counterpart in the mosaics of the south. The Gothic architect sought to obtain the greatest amount of trans-

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lucent surface. The Byzantine builder directed his attention to securing just enough light for the illumination of his glistening walls. The radiance of the northern church was similar to that of flowers or sunset clouds or jewels. The glory of the southern temple was that of dusky gold and gorgeous needlework."

In the matter of sculpture, although the art attained a high degree of development during the Greek period, most of the treasures were subsequently taken to Rome or perished during the frequent wars of conquest. The metopes of Selinus, now in the museum at Palermo, date from the earliest period of Greek art and throw much light on the evolution of sculpture. "Grotesque, stiff, and exaggerated as these sculptures are, they are interesting as some of the earliest attempts at composition, as well as for a striving after life and movement." Lubke says of them: "The style of representation is extraordinarily severe, almost horrible; the Medusa is thoroughly distorted, the other figures are formless and heavy, the faces are mask-like and stiff, with large staring eyes, projecting and compressed lips, broad forehead, and prominent nose. Still more awkward is the distortion of the group of figures, whose

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upper parts present a front view, while the legs are seen in an advancing profile position, a peculiarity which also marks ancient Oriental art. Nevertheless, this remarkable work is not deficient in a just observation of life, and in a correct, though somewhat exaggerated type of form; indeed, in the due filling up of the space allotted, and in a certain bold freedom asserting itself in spite of all the strict fetters of style, we cannot but perceive a lively and artistic creative power. Old traces of polychromatic work, red painting of the background and of the edge of the drapery, increase the primitive character of the work."

Perhaps the most important bit of statuary is the exquisitely beautiful statue known as the Venus Landolina which was found in a garden of Achradina by the Cavaliere Landolina in 1804. It is one of the four most beautiful statues of the goddess of love in existence, and it is generally said to have the most beautiful back of any statue in the world. It is believed to be the statue to which Theocritus refers in the lines:

"Aphrodite stands here; she of heavenly birth;  
Not that base one who's wooed by the children of earth,  
'Tis a goddess, bow down."

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Sicily once excelled in the casting of bronzes, but few specimens have survived. In the matter of coins, Sicily has never been equalled, and large numbers may be seen in the museums at Syracuse and Palermo. A few were of gold, many of silver, and some a compound of gold and silver. Mr. G. F. Hill,<sup>1</sup> who has made the most exhaustive study in English of the Sicilian coins, says of one of the archaic coin heads: "The head of a goddess (probably Victory), wearing a simple earring and necklace, and crowned with a laurel-wreath, her hair caught up behind by a plain cord, and hanging in a heavy loop on the neck, is surrounded first with a faint circular line. . . . It would be difficult to find any monument which conveys a better idea than this coin of the grace and refinement, the faithful and careful workmanship, the combination of formality with the promise of freedom, which are characteristic of the best archaic art of Greece." No visitor to Syracuse should fail to study the fine collection in the museum which dates back twenty-five hundred years, coins which have never been excelled in artistic design and workmanship.

During the period of the renaissance Sicily

<sup>1</sup> G. F. Hill: *Coins of Ancient Sicily*. London, 1903.

produced two sculptors of distinction. Antonello Gagini (1478-1536) was the more famous. After Michael Angelo he is generally ranked as the first sculptor of Italy. His artistry in the delineation of the human face has not been surpassed. Mr. Sladen very properly remarks, "He excelled most of all in large pieces, where low and high reliefs of beautiful human faces are mingled with the delightfully free and graceful conventional ornament unexcelled by the great Florentines." Most Sicilian cities possess one or more of his works, for he was a most prolific artist. The huge tribune behind the altar of the church of San Cito at Palermo is one of his best works. But there are statues at Girgenti, Alcamo, Marsala, Trapani, Syracuse, Nicosia, Catania, Castelve-trano, and Caltagirone. The recently destroyed city of Messina also had several of Gagini's best pieces.

Giacomo Serpotta (1655-1732) belongs to a later and more degenerate period, having worked in stucco. Like his distinguished predecessor he was skilful in the delineation of the human face, and many of his figures in the museum at Palermo are remarkably fine. Several of the churches at Palermo also contain



CIVILETTI'S STATUE OF THE CANARIS BROTHERS.



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notable specimens of his work, such as the oratorios at San Cita, San Domenico, Francesco d'Assisi, and the Ospedale dei Sacerdoti. Works by Serpotta may also be seen at Girgenti, Mazzara, and Alcamo.

Among younger Sicilian sculptors may be named Mario Rutelli, who made the bronze reliefs for the pedestal of the statue of Garibaldi and the bronze group representing lyric poetry in front of the Teatro Massimo at Palermo; Vincenzo Ragusa, whose equestrian statue of Garibaldi is at the capital; Bernedetto Civiletti whose group of the famous Greek naval heroes, the brothers Canaris, adorns the Villa Giulio, also a bronze group representing tragedy in front of the Teatro Massimo and a statue to Victor Emmanuel II.

The renaissance period produced several painters of international rank. One of the earliest was Tommaso di Vigilia (1435-1495), a native of Palermo and a painter of religious subjects. Some of his best works are a painting of the Virgin and Child with angels at Alcamo; an altar piece representing the coronation of the Virgin with Saint John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, and Michael, with a Pietà and the Apostles on the predella in the museum

at Palermo, and a triptych of the Virgin and Child with Santa Lucia and Santa Agatha, also in the Palermo museum.

Antonello da Messina (1444-1495) was one of the earliest Italian painters to learn Van Eyck's method of painting in oil. Some of his finest work is in foreign countries. There is a portrait in the Louvre at Paris, "a masterpiece of truth to life, intensity of expression, and exquisite finish;" a portrait of a young man in the museum at Berlin; a small crucifixion in the museum at Antwerp; and a Saviour in the National Gallery at London. His most important work was the five-section altar piece representing an enthroned Madonna between Saints Gregory and Benedict and an Annunciation in the museum — formerly the convent of San Gregorio — in the recently destroyed city of Messina where the artist was born.

Vincenzo Aniemolo, sometimes called Romano, was born at Palermo near the close of the fifteenth century and died there in 1540. Among his paintings at the capital are a Virgin and Child between the saints in the Church of San Pietro Martire; Virgin of the Rosary in the church of San Domenico; Sposalizio in

the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli; and the following pieces in the museum—the scourging of Christ, six scenes from the life of Christ, the Madonna delivering souls from purgatory, a descent from the cross, and St. Conrad with predella.

Pietro Novelli (1603-1660), another Sicilian painter, is also well represented at Palermo. There is a fine picture of the Virgin and St. Anne in the church of San Matteo; remains of frescoes in the church of San Francesco d'Assisi; a Sant' Andrea Corsini in the church of Del Carmine Maggiore, and a dozen paintings in the museum at Palermo, including a portrait of himself, a Madonna enthroned with saints, an Annunciation of the Virgin, the delivery of Peter from prison, the Virgin Mary and St. Anne, and the communion of St. Mary in Egypt. His masterpiece, the Marriage of Cana, is in the refectory of the Benedictines at Monreale. His types are often tall and exaggerated, but in the delineation of character he surpassed most of his contemporaries. Novelli was the last great Sicilian painter. The young men of the present day—Sciuti, Tommaselli, De Maria, and De Gacono—have not attained distinction beyond the island. Yet Sicily

abounds in grand scenery, splendid ruins, and picturesque types in such abundance as to bring joy to the heart of the artist. Perhaps the great Italian painter of the future will hail from the Garden of the Mediterranean.

## CHAPTER XV

### ÆTNA, THE MOUNT OF MOUNTS

**Aetna**, the culminating mountain of the Sicilian plateau — How it was regarded by the ancients — Freeman's description — Volcanic nature — Dimensions — Fertility of its slopes — Wooded zones — Valle del Bove — Lower slopes — Population — Ascent of Aetna — View from the summit — Circumetna Railway — Randazzo — Bronte — Aderno — Paterno — Destructive eruptions of Aetna — The eruption of 1669.

**MOUNT ÆTNA**, the culminating point of the Sicilian plateau, attains an elevation of 10,758 feet, according to the most recent geodetic surveys. The beauty of its contour, the sheen of its iridescent lavas, its snowy summit rising high above the other peaks of the island, and the great column of smoke curling slowly from its cone make it an object of abiding interest to the traveller in Sicily. It is the immensity rather than the height of Ætna that is impressive, because its very great altitude is lost in the vast expanse of its base.

By the ancients Ætna was supposed to be

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the prison of the mighty chained giant Typhon, the flames proceeding from his breath and the noises from his groans; and when he turned over earthquakes shook the island. Many of the myths of the Greek poets were associated with the slopes of Ætna, such as Demeter, torch in hand, seeking Persephone, Acis and Galatea, Polyphemus and the Cyclops.

Tourists from Homer to Freeman have rhapsodized the Mount of Mounts. The great English historian of the island says: "Ætna stands alone without a fellow, almost without vassal. It is a fortress soaring over a subject land, untouched and unapproached by aught save its own bastions and outposts. Rising as it does in its solitary greatness, far above all the heights of Sicily, above all the heights of southern Europe, its bulk is so vast, its base covers so wide an expanse of ground, the slope of its sides is so gentle, that, the torc of snow which parts the fruitful lower stage from the fiery summit is needed to remind us how far loftier it is than all the other heights of the island."

Ætna was once a volcano in the Mediterranean and in the course of ages it completely filled the surrounding sea with its lava. A

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remarkable feature of the mountain is the large number of minor cones on its sides — some seven hundred in all. Most of these subsidiary cones are from three to six thousand feet in height and they make themselves most strongly felt during periods of great activity. The summit merely serves as a vent through which the vapours and gases make their escape. The natural boundaries of *Ætna* are the Alcantara and Simeto rivers on the north, west, and south, and the sea on the east.

The cliffs on the east, where they terminate abruptly in the sea, are more than three hundred feet high and consist of seven layers of lava which have been successively poured forth from the volcano. Each layer is a compact mass and only the surface has been converted into tufa by the atmospheric agencies which operated for centuries after each eruption. Beautiful caverns enclosed by prismatic columns of basalt at the islets of the Cyclops are the result of changes of structure since the lava was poured forth.

The circumference of the base is ninety miles and the area four hundred and eighty square miles. The slopes are greatly prolonged by lava streams which extend in all directions.



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The issue of different eruptions may be traced by the colour of the lava and the extent of its disintegration. The streams which are the most recent are black, rugged, and fearful; while the more ancient streams are more or less decomposed and thickly covered with vegetation.

The most luxurious fertility characterizes the gradual slopes near the base, the decomposed volcanic soil being almost entirely covered with olives, figs, grapes, and prickly pears. Higher up is the timber zone. Formerly there was a dense forest belt between the zone of cultivated land and the torc of cinders and snow; but the work of forest extermination was almost completed during the reign of the Spanish Bourbons. One may still find scattered oak, ilex, chestnut, and pine interspersed with ferns and aromatic herbs. Chestnut trees of surprising growth are found on the lower slopes. "The Chestnut Tree of the Hundred Horses," for which the slopes of *Ætna* are famous, is not a single tree but a group of several distinct trunks together forming a circle, under whose spreading branches a hundred horses might find shelter.

Above the wooded zone *Ætna* is covered

with miniature cones thrown up by different eruptions and regions of dreary plateau covered with scoriae and ashes and buried under snow a part of the year. While the upper portions of the volcano are covered with snow the greater portion of the year, Ætna does not reach the limit of perpetual snow, and the heat which is emitted from its sides prevents the formation of glaciers in the hollows. One might expect that the quantities of snow and rain which fall on the summit would give rise to numerous streams. But the small stones and cinders absorb the moisture, and springs are found only on the lower slopes. The cinders, however, retain sufficient moisture to support a rich vegetation wherever the surface of the lava is not too compact to be penetrated by roots. The surface of the more recent lava streams is not, as might be supposed, smooth and level, but full of yawning holes and rents.

The regularity of the gradual slopes is broken on the eastern side by the Valle del Bove, a vast amphitheatre more than three thousand feet in depth, three miles in width, and covering an area of ten square miles. The bottom of the valley is dotted with craters which rise in gigantic steps; and, when Ætna

is in a state of eruption, these craters pour forth fiery cascades of lava. The Monte Catenari rise from the Valle del Bove to an elevation of 6,026 feet. At the head of the valley is the Torre del Filosofo at an altitude of 9,570 feet. This is the reputed site of the observatory of Empedocles, the poet and philosopher, who is fabled to have thrown himself into the crater of *Ætna* to immortalize his name.

The lower slopes of *Ætna* — after the basin of Palermo — include the most densely populated parts of Sicily. More than half a million people live on the slopes of a mountain that might be expected to inspire terror. “ Towns succeed towns along its base like pearls in a necklace, and when a stream of lava effects a breach in the chain of human habitations, it is closed up again as soon as the lava has had time to cool.” As soon as the lava has decomposed, the soil produces an excellent yield and this tempts the farmer and the fruit grower to take chances. Speaking of the dual effect of *Ætna* Mr. Freeman says: “ He has been mighty to destroy, but he has also been mighty to create and render fruitful. If his fiery streams have swept away cities and covered fields, they have given the cities a new material

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for their buildings and the fields a new soil rich above all others."

The slopes of *Ætna* were formerly a perfect nest of monasteries and nunneries, originally founded by the Normans. Galley Knight, an English traveller, who visited this section a hundred years ago, says that four-fifths of the inhabitants of the towns were members of pious orders and the remainder "a most wretched, lazy, degraded set of beings, living in dependence upon the convents which possessed the large landed revenues." Nothing more depressing can possibly be imagined, he adds, than "these hotbeds of holiness."

The ascent of *Ætna* is best made from June to September, after most of the snow has disappeared and before the fall rains have set in. The summit, however, is never absolutely free from violent winds which sometimes acquire such force, that it is difficult for the traveller to withstand. The crater of the volcano has a circumference of from two to three miles and a depth of one thousand feet. Its inner sides are covered with incrustations of sulphur and ammonia salts. The main constituents of the lava are olivine, magnetite, and feldspar. Steam and sulphurous acids issue from the

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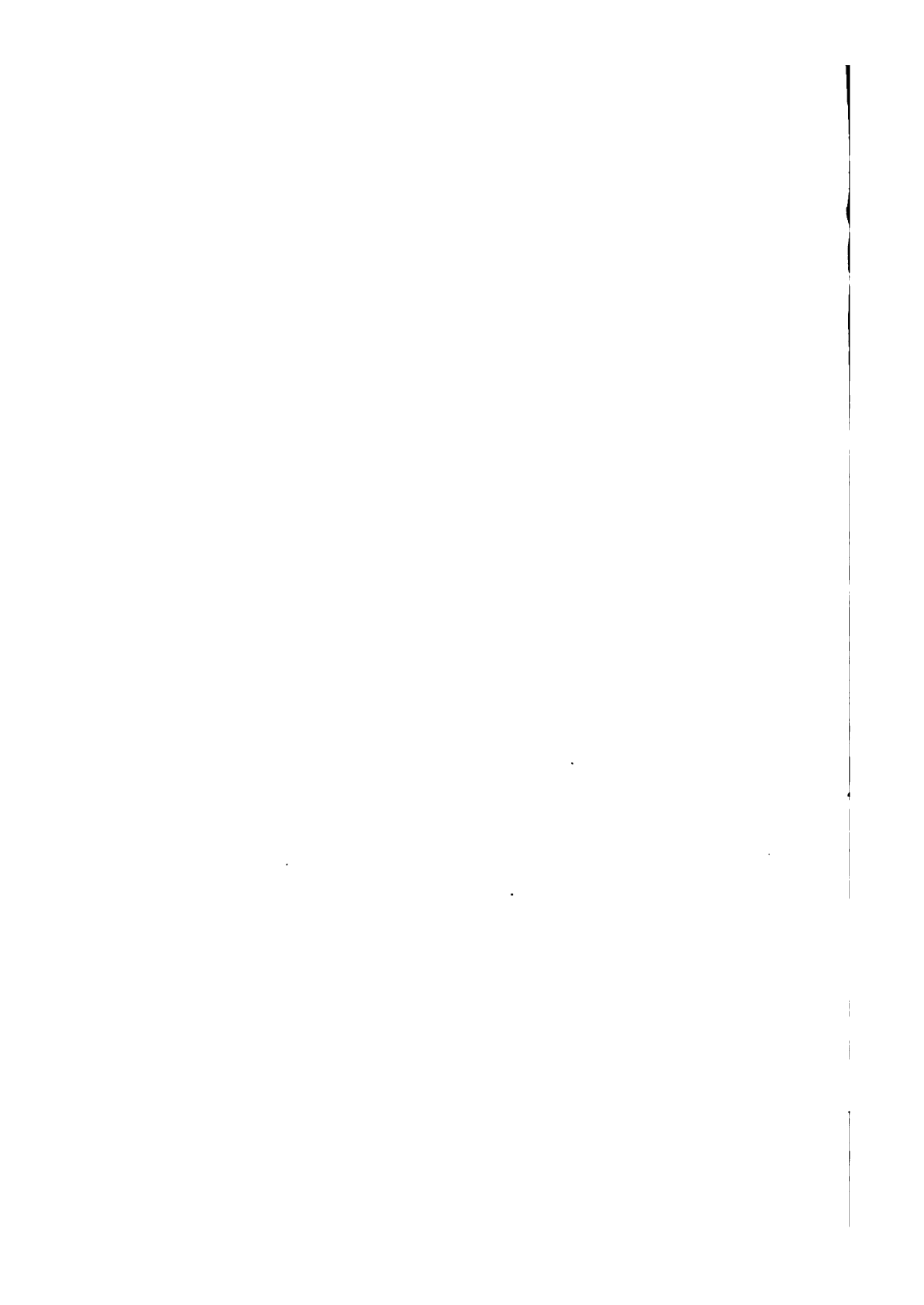
ground near the crater. The radius of vision from the summit is one hundred and fifty miles, giving a horizon of a thousand miles in circumference, and an included area of nearly forty thousand miles.

Alexandre Dumas, the French novelist, says of the ascent of *Ætna* from Catania by the way of Nicolosi: "I know of nothing finer, more original, more varied, wilder and more fertile than the road that leads from Catania to Nicolosi, crossing in turn seas of sand, oases of orange trees, rivers of lava, carpets of wheat fields, and walls of black marble." The villages on the slopes of *Ætna* stand on lava streams, are built of lava blocks, and roofed with lava slabs. They come from the bowels of the Mount of Mounts and to the mountain they are certain some day to return.

An English traveller who made the ascent of *Ætna* about the middle of the last century gives this graphic pen picture: "Vastness and dreary sublimity predominate, relieved with some few touches of exquisite beauty. Standing on the dread summit of the volcano, the eye takes in with astonishment the immense extent of the region, at once desolated and fertilized by its eruptions. Wide beds of lava —



THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT AETNA.



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black, abrupt, and horrid — may be traced down its deep sinuosities and chasms, winding half concealed among the extensive forests below, even through the midst of the fertile region which reposes at its base, until they pour into the sea; and interspersed with these are broad dismal beds of ashes and scorise, — the seat of eternal desolation. Beneath the Bosco, and around the base of Ætna, the boundary of the region subject to its effects may be distinctly traced. Beyond, in all directions, extend the fertile plains and mountains of the island, the latter, however, of an aspect little less wild and desolate than that of Ætna itself. The range of view is almost boundless — Catania, Syracuse, and even, when clear, Malta itself are visible. Castrogiovanni stands upon its rock, conspicuous in the centre of the island. The expanse of sea is most magnificent, with the distant mountains of Calabria and Apulia, and the entrance of the Faro di Messina.”

The base of Ætna is encircled by a railway which gives those tourists who do not care to climb to the summit an opportunity to see something of the varied character of the Mount of Mounts. It attains at points an elevation of



nearly four thousand feet and it passes through some of the most interesting villages and towns located on the slopes of the volcano.

The Circumetna Railway starts from Catania and follows the coast line as far as Giarre; then it follows the old military route taken by Himilcar and Timoleon in ancient times and Charles V in mediæval times northwest through Piedimonte Etneo to Randazzo, a town of ten thousand inhabitants settled by Lombardians who accompanied Adelaide of Monferrat, the wife of Roger I, to Sicily. Although less than ten miles from the summit of *Ætna*, it has always escaped destruction. A grim old mediæval fortress with a huge square tower dominates the town. There are three Gothic churches, the oldest of which dates from the twelfth century. The customs, dress, and habits of the people are distinctly mediæval, and the annual procession of the Pietà on Good Friday is said to be very picturesque.

From Randazzo the railway winds southwest through Maletto to Bronte. It reaches the watershed of the Alcantara and the Simeto near Maletto at an altitude of 3,733 feet above the level of the sea. The Duchy of Bronte was given to Lord Nelson, the English admiral, in

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1799 by King Ferdinand of the Two Sicilies. The town has twenty thousand inhabitants, "the most villainous people in Sicily." From Bronte the railway line descends to the south to Adernò, an ancient Sikel city with a temple that is reputed to have been guarded by a thousand dogs. This was the ancient Hadranum founded by Dionysius I in the year 400 B. C. A dilapidated old Norman castle, with remains of frescoes of Adelasia, the daughter of Roger I, taking the veil; the convent of Santa Lucia, also founded by Roger; fragments of the cella of the ancient temple, and the remains of a Roman aqueduct are among the objects of historic interest.

The railway takes a southeastern direction from Adernò to Catania through Paternò. Paternò is also an old Sikel town. It became Hellenized at an early period and was one of the few Sikel communities that did not participate with Decetius in his efforts to throw off the Greek yoke in 453 B. C. A castle which is supposed to date from the period of the first Roger overlooks the town. Nearby is a mud volcano which has occasional eruptions and a mineral spring that is strongly charged with carbonic acid gas. Between Paternò and Misterbianco

the railway traverses the vast stream of lava that was erupted in 1669.

According to Lyall *Ætna* is an older volcano than Vesuvius and its earliest eruptions antedate the glacial period in northern Europe. Eighty eruptions are recorded since the historic period, the most destructive being those of 396, 126, and 121 B. C. and 1169, 1329, 1537, and 1669 of the Christian era. Plato and Thucydides both give accounts of the early eruptions. Indeed the Attic philosopher's first visit to the island was made that he might study the renowned volcano.

But meagre accounts exist of the early eruptions. That of 1169, which was one of the most destructive during the mediæval period, took place at the time of the vigil of the feast of Santa Agatha at Catania. The cathedral was filled with people, all of whom, including the bishop and forty-four Benedictine monks, perished. In Catania alone more than fifteen thousand persons perished.

The eruption of 1669 is generally considered the most destructive, but largely because we have more accurate and complete contemporary descriptions of this disaster than of previous catastrophes. One of the best scientific

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accounts is that of Alfonso Borelli, who was at the time one of the professors in the university at Catania. He states that on the morning of the 8th of March the sun was suddenly obscured and serious earthquakes, which continued for three days, were felt. A fissure twelve miles long, six feet wide, and very deep opened on the side of the mountain and from this issued a bright light.

Six mouths opened on the line of the fissure which emitted vast volumes of smoke accompanied by noises which could be heard forty miles away. Soon a new crater, a mile below the others, opened, and from this red hot stones, sand, and ashes were thrown into the air and covered the country for a distance of sixty miles. A torrent of lava with a front of two miles issued from the new crater. It flowed toward Catania and destroyed fourteen towns and many thousands of people in its progress.

Just before reaching Catania the lava stream undermined a hill covered with wheat fields which it carried forward a considerable distance. The walls of Catania were sixty feet high, but it soon rose to the top and fell into the city in a fiery cascade. When it finally reached the sea it caused the waters to boil violently

and great clouds of steam arose carrying up quantities of scoriae. It filled up the port and destroyed most of the city. It is estimated that *Ætna* poured forth 3,532 cubic feet of lava on this occasion and converted forty square miles of fertile land into a waste. The double cone of Monti Rossi was formed by the ashes ejected during the eruption of 1669.

A traveller from northern Europe who visited the mountain a few years later wrote: "The vines are growing on the black slag and the people are singing and lying and toiling with no thought of what has been so often and may in their day occur again." As soon as vegetation can get a foothold on the surface of the lava-stream it soon attains prodigious growth. This is particularly true of the prickly pear which speedily strikes its roots in the fissures of the lava and helps the forces of nature in the work of disintegration. Holes are blasted in the lava for olive, almond, and citrus trees and they grow excellently.

Among the more recent eruptions may be named that of 1811, when the crater Mont San Simon was formed; 1838, when a red cupola overhung the mountain at night; 1843, when several towns were destroyed; 1852, the most

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serious eruption of the century; during 1865 the eruptions lasted for six months; 1885, when the new crater Monte Gemellaro was formed; in 1891 and 1892, when considerable harm was done to orchards and grain fields, and in 1899, when an explosion occurred in the central crater and vast quantities of ashes were deposited on the south and east slopes of the mountain.

## CHAPTER XVI

### PALERMO THE NORMAN CITY

Picturesque situation — The fertile plain — Phoenician origin — Occupation by the Carthagenians — Capture by the Romans — The Saracen capital — Splendour during the Norman period — Mixed nature of the population — Influence of Arab builders — Moresque palaces of *La Zisa* and *La Cuba* — Memories of *Boccaccio* — Church of *San Giovanni degli Ermeti* — Other Saracenic-Byzantine churches — *La Mortorana* — *San Spirito* and the *Sicilian Vespers* — The cathedral at Palermo — Its art treasures — The Norman cathedral at *Monreale* — Its rich interior — The Benedictine cloister at *Monreale* — *Palazzo Reale* and *Capella Palatina* — Other palaces at Palermo — The *Cappuccini* monastery and its mummified bodies — Topography of Palermo — Its monuments — Museum — University — Botanical Garden.

NATURE has been prodigal in Sicily in the matter of scenic sites for her cities and towns; and in the case of the Greek cities, the race had a keen eye for the selection of spots the most beautiful for the habitation of man. While not one of the original Hellenic city-states, Palermo has a superb location on the northern shores of the central island of the central sea; its harbour is guarded by the two picturesque cliffs and the fertile plain that forms the *compagne*



VIEW OF PALERMO FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN.



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is hemmed in by a semicircular cord of rugged mountains. "Perhaps there are few spots upon the surface of the globe more beautiful than Palermo," writes Mr. Symonds. "The hills on either hand descend upon the sea with long-drawn delicately-broken outlines, so delicately tinted with aerial hues at early dawn or beneath the blue light of a full moon the panorama seems to be some fabric of fancy, that must fade away, 'like shapes of clouds we form,' to nothing. Within the cradle of these hills, and close upon the tideless water, lies the city. Behind and around on every side stretches the famous *Conco d'Oro*, or golden shell, a plain of marvellous fertility, so called because of its richness and also because of its shape; for it tapers to a fine point where the mountains meet, and spreads abroad, where they diverge, like a cornucopia. The whole of this long vega is a garden, thick with olive-groves and orange trees, with orchards of nespole and palms and almonds, with fig-trees and locust-trees, with judas-trees that blush in spring, and with flowers as multitudinously brilliant as the fretwork of sunset clouds."

During the days of Phœnician and Carthaginian supremacy Palermo was a busy mart

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— a great clearing house for the commerce of the island and that part of the Mediterranean. But during the days of the Saracens it became not only a very busy city but also a very beautiful city. The Arabian poets extolled its charms in terms that sound to us exceedingly extravagant. One of them wrote: “ Oh how beautiful is the lakelet of the twin palms and the island where the spacious palace stands. The limpid waters of the double springs resemble liquid pearls, and their basin is a sea; you would say that the branches of the trees stretched down to see the fishes in the pool and smile at them. The great fishes swim in those clear waters, and the birds among the gardens tune their songs. The ripe oranges of the island are like fire that burns on boughs of emerald; the pale lemon reminds me of a lover who has passed the night in weeping for his absent darling. The two palms may be compared to lovers who have gained an inaccessible retreat against their enemies, or raise themselves erect in pride to confound the murmurs and the ill thoughts of jealous men. O palms of two lakelets of Palermo, ceaseless, undisturbed, and plenteous days for ever keep your freshness.”

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Palermo under the Phœnicians was only trading colony, but with the development of Carthage it became the seat of Carthaginian power in Sicily. Neither Phœnicians nor Carthaginians, however, have left behind any traces of their occupation, although they were in continuous possession of the city for a thousand years. It was taken from the Carthaginians first by King Pyrrhus of Epirot in 276 B. C., and twenty-two years later by the Roman consuls Aulus Atilius and Cornelius Scipio. But it was neglected by the Romans, and during the period of the disintegration of the Roman empire it was occupied by the Vandals and the Goths. Belisarius captured it from the Goths in 535 A. D., and it remained a part of the Byzantine empire until it was taken by the Saracens in 830. They made it their capital and the seat of Arab commerce, industry, letters, and philosophy. They introduced the cotton-plant, the sugar-cane, and the mulberry tree, the produce of which they exchanged for paper, silk, and the luxuries of the countries of the Orient. Unfortunately most of the Saracen monuments were destroyed by the subsequent Christian races who occupied Palermo, so that we have to-day almost no visible connections with the

splendour of mosques, palaces, villas, and gardens whose grandeur and charms the Arab poets enthusiastically extolled.

According to the Arab writer Ibn Haukal, during the Saracen occupation the city was divided into five separate quarters, two of which were walled and had towers to make them separately defensible. The fortified quarters were occupied by the emirs and their courts, and the noblemen of the municipality. Here were also located baths, public buildings, the prisons, and the arsenal. The unwalled part near the Marina was occupied by foreign merchants and the warehouses connected with the shipping. The two other unwalled regions — the most populous part of Palermo — contained the workshops, money-changers, oil-merchants, grain-dealers, tailors, cabinet-makers, metal-workers, and representatives of many other trades and crafts. Each craft was congregated in a particular district, butchers being the only exception. There were one hundred and fifty butcher-shops scattered throughout the city and many in the suburbs. The harbour extended much farther inland than it does to-day, and the streams which flowed into it were spread out into lakes and marshes for the

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growth of sugar-cane and the papyrus. The streets of the city were paved — a rare municipal improvement during the mediæval period — although the water-supply came from wells and rain cisterns. There were five hundred mosques in the city and the immediate suburbs, and the population was probably in the neighbourhood of seven hundred thousand people. It was very mixed, although the Jews alone had separate quarters. The Saracens were much more tolerant than most of their Christian successors, and all religious faiths flourished in the city. There are not many existing evidences of the Saracen reign. Beyond the lower part of the archbishop's tower and a door in the Maria della Vittoria, most of the so-called Arab relics belong to the Norman period, during which the Arab influence survived.

With the coming of the Normans Palermo enjoyed even greater prosperity than had been experienced under the liberal rule of the Saracens. This was the most brilliant period in the history of the city. The population was even more mixed than during Moslem supremacy. Besides the Greeks, Normans, Saracens, and Hebrews, there were commercial colonies of Slavs, Venetians, Lombardians, Catalans, and

Pisans. The ghetto was near San Giovanni dei Tartari; and under the Normans, as under the Saracens, the Jews formed an influential element of the population. But as the Roman Catholic church acquired power over the Aragonese, and with the subsequent establishment of the Holy Inquisition, the Hebrew element of the population was exiled or exterminated. The Greeks lingered longer, but they were ultimately under the Bourbons forced to recognize the Roman rite. After the downfall of Manfred the Moslems, who, like the Hebrews and Greeks, had formed an important part of the population of the city under the Norman rule, were likewise forced to leave the city.

The most interesting public monuments at Palermo date from the Norman period; and while many of the buildings are strikingly Saracenic in character and recall similar structures erected by the Arabs in Spain, it will be remembered that the Normans brought no trained architects to the island, but employed the Arabs, Greeks, and Hebrews who had already been in the service of the Saracen emirs. But the Arab influence in architecture was dominant, and it survived well into the fourteenth century. This explains the Arabic character of the Torre del

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Diavolo, the palace of the Holy Inquisition, the Porto Santa Agatha, the Palazzo Sclafani, the arches under the colonnade, the churches of San Antonio Abate, the Maddalena, La Magione, and many other ecclesiastical and public buildings in Palermo.

Two of the most distinctly Saracenic buildings in Palermo are the Moresque palaces of La Zisa and La Cuba. Like the Alhambra and the other Moorish palaces of Spain, the exterior of La Zisa is plain. All the splendour is within. The honeycomb tracery, the inlaid marbles, the paved floor, the fountains and miniature cascades, the beautiful gardens filled with orange and lemon trees and exotic shrubs, must have made it the most splendid Christian palace during the mediæval period. Leandro Alberti, who travelled in Sicily in 1526, wrote of La Zisa: "At a short distance in front of the principal entrance appears a large square fish-pond which is fed by the waters in the hall. The sides of the fish-pond are faced with stone, and each side is fifty feet in length. In the midst of the pond is a square pavilion, approached by a little bridge of stone. Within the pavilion is a vaulted room, eight feet by twelve. In the upper room are three large win-



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dows, of which the front looks upon the palace. Each of these windows is divided by a slender pillar of the finest marble. The ceiling is vaulted and ornamented in the Moresque style. The floor is inlaid with a variety of marbles." The palace is now private property. The spacious gardens have been displaced by citrus-fruit orchards, although local legends assert that the shades of the Norman kings, gorgeously attired in Oriental garb, may often be seen in the night walking through the orchards.

La Cuba was erected by William II as a suburban pleasure palace. It was also built in the Moorish style and stood in an enclosure two miles in circumference. The gardens were adorned with runnels of water, luxurious shrubs and flowers, and vaulted pavilions. Only one of the pavilions, La Cubola, survives. It is a graceful structure consisting of four pointed arches. It was the scene of one of Boccaccio's stories. The château stood in the centre of the grounds. The exterior is still perfect, but the beautiful interior ornamentations have almost entirely disappeared. Only a few of the interlacing patterns and arabesques may still be seen; and the sombre building, now used as an artillery barrack, has

little to suggest the splendour of the days when, in the time of Frederick II, Gianni di Procida surprised his lost love here.

The oldest Norman church in Palermo is that of San Giovanni degli Eremiti, founded in 1132 by King Roger on the site of a monastery that dated from the days of Pope Gregory. The grant states that it is for "the love of God and the salvation of our mother and our father the great Count Roger, and of the most serene Duke Robert Guiscard, our uncle of blessed memory, and also for the welfare of our consort Queen Elvira." The church incorporated an original mosque and in appearance it is thoroughly Oriental. There are five domes, the two largest rising directly from the walls of the nave; the two over the south transept and choir rest upon square substructures, and the fifth dome, above the north transept, crowns the tower. The exterior of the domes is plastered and painted red. The interior of the church is plain throughout and shows no trace of mosaics or other decorations. The plan suggests an Egyptian cross with three apses; the nave is divided into squares by a pointed arch, and the windows are pointed. The red domes of San Giovanni degli Eremiti present a more

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Santo Spirito, better known as the church of the Sicilian Vespers, was the scene of the massacre of the French whom Charles of Anjou had brought to Palermo. The tale of Gianni and Restituta by Boccaccio is concerned with personages of the Sicilian Vespers, and Verdi made the massacre the theme of an opera which he wrote for Paris. Both Santo Spirito and Giovanni dei Lebbrosi, however, have undergone marked restorations in recent years.

The cathedral at Palermo was begun by Walter of the Mill, an Englishman, during the reign of William the Good, and was continued during the following centuries. Its exterior presents in consequence a variety of architectural styles and dates. The most picturesque feature of the building is the southern porch and the least pleasing part the incongruous modern dome. Only the crypt and the south and east walls belong to the original building and the interior has been thoroughly modernized. The lower part of the bell tower dates from the twelfth century and the façade from the fourteenth century. While wonderfully ornate in its decorations, the exterior has some strange inconsistencies. "Pointed arch panels with mouldings enriched with the egg and dart, Greek honey-



THE CATHEDRAL AT PALERMO.

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suckle-forms inlaid above a corbelling the arches upon which are pointed and filled in with renaissance shell-forms, and, on the south side, a colonnade with an arch in the centre, beneath a broken pediment, the architrave of the door beneath which, after passing the corner, suddenly shoots up into a pointed arch, terminating in a scrolled keystone of the late renaissance type."

Against the protests of the Sicilians, Ferdinand I, the Bourbon king, permitted a Florentine architect to ruin the interior with "his railway-station stucco-work." The beautiful lapis-lazuli, jasper, and porphyry were torn from the walls to be displaced by ugly stucco, and the precious decorative materials that were removed were sold by the ignoble king in foreign countries. Some of the best art works of Sicilian painters and sculptors disappeared, and most of the sepulchral slabs and marbles were broken up. Only the chapels containing the remains of the Norman kings were left undisturbed. These chapels contain four canopied monuments similar in design. Two of the tombs are of plain porphyry and two of white marble inlaid with mosaics. One chapel contains the tombs of King Roger I and Em-

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peror Frederick II, and the other Constance, the daughter of King Roger and her husband Henry IV. In an ancient Greek sarcophagus are the ashes of Constantia, the wife of Frederick II.

The cathedral contains several important statues by Antonello Gagni, including the Virgin and the apostles, and a holy-water basin with reliefs of the Passion of Christ. There is also a painting of St. Cecilia with an angel playing the lute, by Antonio di Crescenzo, and in a special chapel is the silver shrine of Santa Rosalia, the patron saint of Palermo. This shrine, which weighs fourteen hundred pounds, is carried through the streets of the city annually at the time of the anniversary of the tutelary saint, and at such other times when the city may be in dire need of divine intervention. The crypt, which is one of the oldest parts of the cathedral, is supported by eight granite columns, and here repose the remains of the archbishops of Palermo, some of them in ancient and early Christian sarcophagi. The archbishop's palace, with the interesting campanile, adjoins the cathedral; and in the square fronting the cathedral, is a statue of Santa Rosalia. King Roger, William the Bad, Will-

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iam the Good, Tancred, Henry IV, Frederick II, Manfred, Peter of Aragon, and all the kings of the House of Aragon, down to 1410, were crowned in the Palermo cathedral.

The cathedral at Monreale is a much better example of the architecture of the second Norman style than the one at Palermo. Monreale, or the royal mountain, is an elevated peak in the suburbs of Palermo, at an elevation of 1,150 feet above the city. It was the site of a Saracen town; and tradition, which has the force of history with the pious Sicilians, relates that on one occasion William the Good was hunting on this mountain, and as he had become greatly exhausted by the chase, he threw himself upon the ground for a bit of repose and recuperation. He fell into a deep slumber, during which the Virgin appeared to him and commanded him to erect on this spot a sanctuary in her honour that should be more splendid than anything in England or France. The reader will have already observed that the Virgin must have been something of a traveller and that her frequent trips to Sicily would suggest that she was distinctly partial to the Garden of the Mediterranean.

William II, good son of the church that he



was when the Roman pontiffs did not balk his political aspirations, set himself to the task of complying with the Virgin's request. He scoured his kingdom for the best Greek and Arab architects and decorators; and he caused to be erected one of the most splendid ecclesiastical monuments of that gorgeous architectural period.

The cathedral at Monreale is not imposing externally, for it lacks the lofty towers, the flying buttresses, and the decorated windows that one finds in the cathedrals of France and England. The dome is not consequential; and although there is a tower, it is small and without significance of style. But at the east end of the cathedral there are some interesting arches and some striking mosaics. At the west portal there is a magnificent bronze door that is adorned with scriptural subjects and arabesques.

When once in the interior, one may well believe that it is the noblest ecclesiastical building in Sicily, and in the matter of rich mosaics unrivalled in the world. Its proportions are most imposing with its great nave and aisles of eight bays paved geometrically with black, white, and purple marble. And its eighty thou-

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sand square feet of golden mosaics produce an indescribably gorgeous effect. Fergusson remarks:

“ It is evident that the architectural features of the building of which the cathedral of Monreale is the type were subordinate in the eyes of the builders to the mosaic decorations which cover every part of the interior, and are in fact the glory and pride of the edifice, by which it is entitled to rank among the finest of mediæval churches. All the principal personages of the Bible are represented in the stiff but grand style of Greek art, sometimes with Greek inscriptions, and accompanied by scenes illustrating the Old and New Testaments. They are separated by and intermixed with arabesques and ornaments in colour and gold, making up a decoration unrivalled in its class by anything—except, perhaps, St. Mark’s—the Middle Ages have produced.”

The spacious nave of the cathedral is flanked with massive pillars of coloured marble, some of them taken from ancient Roman buildings, and surmounted by capitals that are both varied in character and rich in execution. There is a single aisle running behind the nave, and the flat roof is richly carved and decorated.

To except the pointed arches, there is little in the building to recall the Gothic styles then prevalent in Normandy. The colossal head of Christ in the central apse produces a striking effect, although I thought it inferior to the one in the cathedral at Cefalù. The tombs of the Norman kings William the Bad and William the Good are in the cathedral at Monreale, and beneath the altar is a sarcophagus in which the heart of Saint Louis is supposed to repose, although the Sainte Chapelle at Paris also claims to possess this relic. One of the aisle chapels contains some exquisite wood-carvings illustrating the Passion of Christ.

Concerning the diversified architectural types of the cathedral Mr. Symonds writes: "The genius of Latin Christianity determined the basilica shape of the cathedral of Monreale. Its bronze doors were wrought by smiths of Trani and Pisa. Its walls were incrustated with the mosaics of Constantinople. The wood-work of its roof and the emblazoned patterns in porphyry and serpentine and glass and smalto, which cover its whole surface, were designed by Oriental decorators. Norman sculptors added their dog-tooth and chevron to the moulding of its porches. Greek, French, and Arabs may



**CLOISTERS OF THE BENEDICTINE MONASTERY AT MONREALE.**

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have tried their skill in turn upon the multitudinous ornaments of its cloister capitals.”

Adjoining the cathedral of Monreale is the magnificent Benedictine cloister. Like the cathedral it combines several styles of architecture. The cloister is surrounded by an immense number of single and coupled pillars surmounted by small pointed arches. The ornamentations are most varied in design and delicate in execution. Some of the slender columns are wreathed with foliage and inlaid with brilliant mosaics, “all the religion and all the poetry of their age sculptured in stone.” The central court is planted with palms, aloes, and yuccas. The whole effect of the monastery is so gorgeously Moorish that it has very aptly been described as a “monastic Alhambra.” It contains a fine painting by Pietro Novelli of Saint Benedict surrounded by the heads of the religious orders under the Benedictine rule. From the Benedictine monastery at Monreale one of the finest views of Palermo, the *Conca d'Oro*, and the central sea may be obtained.

Among notable civic buildings of the Norman period may be mentioned the ponderous Palazzo Reale and the exquisite Cappella Palatina. The huge misshapen mass of buildings

and towers known as the Palazzo Reale is in a variety of architectural styles. The buildings occupy the site of a Saracenic castle and they served the twofold purpose of palace and citadel of the Norman and Suabian kings of Sicily and later of the Spanish viceroys and the iniquitous Holy Inquisition. Here also at the beginning of the nineteenth century Piazzì discovered the first of the asteroids. Al Kasr of the Saracens was transformed by Roger II and William the Bad and William the Good into a fortified royal residence. The dining room of King Roger preserves its original character and the "perfect Norman room, with its mosaics above and its marble panelling below, has no equal among domestic chambers for antiquity and condition." The baroque Porta Nuova, of the period of the Spanish viceroys, the well-proportioned loggia, the pyramidal roof decorated with painted tiles, and the rooms occupied by Garibaldi during his dictatorship of Sicily are not without interest. But for the most part this ponderous architectural mass, barring its exquisite little chapel, is tediously uninteresting.

The Capella Palatina is generally regarded as the most beautiful palace chapel in the

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world. Mr. Symonds admits that some of the churches at Ravenna may be historically more interesting, but he adds that none are so rich in detail and lustrous in effect as this little masterpiece of the mosaic art. It is only seventy feet long and forty feet wide, and the cupola is scarcely fifty-five feet high. It is built in the form of a Latin cross with the cupola at the intersection of the cross. The rich marble pavements, the perforated and inlaid screens, the moulded spiral columns, the few windows, and these small in size, and the wealth of mosaics on a ground of gold give the chapel a rich but not a gaudy effect.

The chapel has a nave and aisles, at the end of which there are three semi-circular apses with a dome for the admission of light. The columns are for the most part antique, with capitals in a composite Greek style; but the arches, which repose on the columns, and the richly fretted roof are strikingly Saracenic, recalling the Alhambra at Granada. The choir and altars are surrounded with low walls panelled with precious red porphyry. The walls and dome are covered with a gold ground upon which are quaint and gorgeous scriptural representations in beautiful mosaics. The best of



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the mosaics are those in the three apses — a colossal head of Christ occupying the centre and the figures of St. Peter and St. Paul in the other two. These mosaics have sometimes been characterized as King Roger's Bible. The crypt is said to have been the refuge of St. Peter during his visits to Palermo. It contains among other treasures the jewelled crucifix used at the trials of the Holy Inquisition. It was in the Cappella Palatina that Maria Amelie, the daughter of Ferdinand IV, married Louis Philippe, Duke of Orleans and afterwards king of France, during the exile of the Bourbons from Naples. It was also in this chapel that Richard Wagner got his first notion of the Holy Grail.

Among other palaces in Palermo of historical interest may be named the Palazzo Chiaramonti, which for nearly two hundred years was the seat of the Holy Inquisition in Sicily. It was built by the Chiaramonti family in 1307, but after the execution of the head of the family in 1392 it was occupied in turn as a palace of justice, the residence of the Spanish viceroys, and from 1600 to 1782 as the headquarters of the Holy Inquisition. The great hall has a painted ceiling which represents in great detail the life

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of the fourteenth century after the manner of the famous tapestry at Bayeux. The Villa Giulia, the most beautiful in Italy, was made from a part of the garden attached in former times to the Chiaramonti palace. It was first laid out in 1777, but has been extended and improved since the Bourbons were driven from the island. Here is found the wealth of subtropical plants and shrubs which grow so luxuriously in the uniform climate of Palermo.

The Palazzo Sclafani, now used as a military barrack, was built as a rival to the Chiaramonti palace in 1330. It contains the well-known fresco "The Dance of Death," the only meritorious fresco in Palermo of the renaissance period. "Death is a skeleton on a white horse which gallops madly on over a crowd of persons, emperors, popes, dukes, kings, queens, princes, magistrates, warriors, courtiers, people of all ages and conditions." Other palaces at Palermo with historic connections or art treasures are the Raffadalli, Briuccia, Trigona, and Trabia.

One of the grewsome sights of Palermo is the Cappuccini monastery, which is famous for having the largest and most varied collection of dried bodies in the world. It is a sort of

a pious Barnum show, and would be grotesque but for the fact that it is so unspeakably ghastly. For hundreds of years the Cappuccini monks made a specialty of drying the dead bodies of cardinals, nobles, court ladies, and others that could enjoy the luxury, after which the cadavers were dressed in the costumes left by the deceased for the purpose, and pinned to the walls of the catacombs of the monastery. When the dead bodies were received at the monastery they were laid in dark cells upon grates of stone where they were exposed to a slow operation of heat for six months. After the soft parts were dried the bodies were put in glass-covered coffins, placed in niches, or strung on wires. In the drying process the skin shrivelled and the faces assumed every expression of ghastliness and horror.

The shocking and disgusting effect is heightened by the clothing — a soldier in his military uniform; a noble with frock-coat, silk hat, and cane; a maiden of uncertain years dressed in a gown trimmed with costly laces, and wearing white kid gloves. Thus the defunct monks for centuries cultivated the morbid fancy of the Sicilians by keeping in sight the remains of friends and relatives instead of consigning

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them to the Campo Santo, until the Italian government interfered a few years back and stopped the practice. But this sane and hygienic decree was interpreted by the ultra pious and clerical as another evidence of the warfare of the government against religion! The bodies already dried the monks continue to expose, since they have received funds from the deceased for the purpose, but no new bodies are admitted. Some of the bodies are exposed in open coffins or glass boxes, some are seated on chairs, some are stood against the wall or placed in niches, and others hung to the wall by waist bands or strung on wires. "Soldiers and cardinals and court beauties dried into mummies and leaning forward in their robes from vaulted walls to preach from their silent withered lips a startling sermon to humanity."

Palermo, with 350,000 inhabitants, is the largest city of Sicily and one of the best administered cities of Italy. Its location, as already noted, in an amphitheatre and enclosed by a fertile plain, gives it distinct economic advantages, and its climate is the best in Europe. The commerce of the city in oranges, lemons, grain, oil, and other products, is steadily increasing. Its streets are spacious and

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generally well paved and the system of electric tramways is excellent.

Two main streets, which date back to the Saracen days, divide the city into four quarters. The Corso Vittorio Emanuele runs nearly east and west and the Via Maqueda north and south. They intersect at Quattro Canti, the chief focus of traffic. The broad Marina along the harbour forms a pleasant promenade, and the new quarter of the city — Giardino Inglese — contains many handsome modern villas. Palermo is well supplied with comfortable hôtels, and the rates are reasonable.

There are numerous open spaces or piazzas and some of these are adorned with handsome statuary. The Piazza Marina is filled with majestic palms and yuccas, and it is probably the finest square in the kingdom of Italy. During the Bourbon days it was used for fairs and the *autos-da-fé* of the Holy Inquisition. The Piazza della Vittoria, in front of the Royal Palace, once contained a statue of Philip IV, but the rebellious Sicilians tore it down and used the bronze for cannons. The Bourbons later erected a monument here to Philip V. A theatre was located here during the Roman days.

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The Piazza Croce dei Vespri is the reputed square where the four thousand Frenchmen were buried after the Sicilian Vespers in 1282. The Piazza Bologni contains a statue of Charles V by Livolsi, representing the emperor in the act of swearing to the Sicilian constitution. Bellini, the composer, has a square named in his honour, and one is named for Crispi, the Sicilian statesman.

The museum at Palermo, the best in Sicily, occupies the suppressed monastery of the oratory of Filippini. It contains a good collection of relics of mediæval and renaissance art, as well as earlier fragments of Sikel and Phœnician art; treasures from Greek temples, including the metopes of Selinus, referred to elsewhere in this work; together with examples of the best Sicilian painters and sculptors during modern times. The museum is under the direction of Professor Antonio Salinas, who has conducted the most important recent excavations in Sicily.

The university, founded in the fifteenth century, occupies the monastery of San Domenico. It has all the academic faculties, with museums, laboratories, libraries, and hospitals. It is attended by more than thirteen hundred stu-

dents; and, as noted elsewhere, its professors are among the first men of letters, science, and art in Sicily. Besides the university, there are at Palermo numerous classical and technical secondary schools, as well as professional and special schools, and one of the largest city libraries in Italy. The opera house, Teatro Massimo, which is a modern building, is the largest temple consecrated to tonal art in the world.

The Botanical Garden of Palermo is singularly rich in a great variety of sub-tropical plant-life — date palms, giant bamboos, coffee-trees, bananas, agaves, aloes, cocoanut-palms, cinnamon-plants, papyrus, yuccas, and an astonishingly wide variety of brilliantly coloured flowering plants.

## CHAPTER XVII

### MESSINA AND THE RECENT EARTHQUAKE <sup>1</sup>

The sickle-shaped harbour of Messina — Few ancient monuments — Early settlement by the Greeks — Neighbouring colonies — Government of the city during the Greek period — Wars with Carthage — Occupation by the Romans — Conquest of Messina by the Saracens and the Normans — Effect of the Sicilian Vespers — Under Spanish viceroys — The cathedral at Messina — Other historic churches — The fountains of Montorsoli — The municipal museum — Campo Santo — Frequency of earthquakes — Their causes — Mr. Perret's explanation of the recent catastrophe — Description of the earthquake of December the 28th, 1908 — The shock and the tidal wave — The work of rescue — Loss of life and complete destruction of the city.

MESSINA has for its site a natural amphitheatre at the foot of the rugged Aspromonte mountain range. The sickle-shaped harbour — one of the best in the world — is overshadowed by the rugged peaks that furnish the background of the amphitheatre. Facing the har-

<sup>1</sup>The first part of this chapter was written at Messina shortly before the recent earthquake. With the single change of the tense of the verbs from present to past, it has seemed best to leave the subject-matter stand as written, that readers may the more easily form a true conception of the extent of the recent calamity.



bour was the broad and busy Marina; on the higher grounds, the shops and business places; higher up, the villas and pavilions of the more prosperous merchants, and on the crests of the roseate mountains, the ruins of Saracen and Norman citadels and fortifications.

In spite of its beautiful location and antiquity, Messina was for the tourist a dull and featureless city. Although well-built, with broad lava-paved streets, it had few buildings or monuments of note; the houses were low-storied and heavy; the thoroughfares were indescribably dirty, and they swarmed with savage, swarthy beggars with a minimum of clothes and a maximum of gesture, volubility, and dirt.

Messina was founded by Cumaen pirates and Chalcidians in 730 B. C. on the site of an ancient Sikel town, and was named Zankle on account of its sickle-shaped harbour. It was captured by fugitives from Samos and Miletus in 493 B. C. and its name subsequently changed to Messana after Messene in the Peloponnesus. The city was first governed by a democratic constitution, but Anaxilus subsequently usurped the control which he bequeathed to his sons. At a later date the constitution was re-estab-



**MESSINA AND THE CALABRIAN MOUNTAINS (BEFORE THE EARTHQUAKE).**

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lished and it long continued one of the independent Greek city-states of Sicily.

A colony was planted on the northern coast at Milazzo, probably as a border fortress against the Phœnicians, who already occupied the northwestern part of the island. The coins of Zankle during the early period bore on one side a dolphin and a sickle and on the other a field divided into thirteen parts with a mussel in the centre. The city must have early attained great importance as a commercial mart, as Diodorus mentions as many as six hundred vessels in the harbour at one time.

The people of Zankle took a leading part in the Sikel war when Ducetius, a native Sikel chief, attempted to drive the Greeks from the island. But the city remained neutral in the great war of Athens against Syracuse. During the first Carthaginian invasion (396 B. C.) Himilco entirely destroyed the city and took the inhabitants captives. But it was speedily rebuilt by Dionysius as a basis for operations against the near-by Calabrian towns.

Hippo became tyrant of the city and formed a hostile alliance with Carthage against Syracuse. In the subsequent struggles of Agathocles against the Carthaginians the city again

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took the part of the Africans. The Mamertine mercenaries of Agathocles, being cast out of Syracuse for their turbulence, were welcomed at Messina; but they soon seized the city and retained it.

Hannibal soon attacked them and possessed himself of the castle, and the Mamertines called upon the Romans to come to their aid against the invading Carthagenians. This was the beginning of the First Punic War and the initial step which ultimately made Sicily a province of Rome. It became a Roman city in 264 B. C. and was shown greater favours than any of the other cities of the island during the seven hundred years that Rome was supreme in Sicily.

Messina was captured by the Saracens in 843 A. D. They treated the inhabitants with consideration and tolerated the continuance of the religion, laws, and privileges which had been granted by the Byzantine masters. But, as already pointed out, the Saracens made Palermo their capital, and Messina did not receive the attention from her new masters that the Romans had accorded her.

The Normans came to Messina in 1061, and during the crusades the city prospered greatly as a clearing house for the plunder which the

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pious pilgrims brought with them from the Holy Land. Richard Cœur-de-Lion of England and Philip Augustus of France tarried at Messina for some months on their way to Jerusalem and they were the nominal rulers of the city during their sojourn.

'After the massacres of the Sicilian Vespers in 1282 Charles of Anjou in vain besieged the city. Twenty-nine of his ships were captured and eighty were burned and King Charles "gnawed his fingers with rage at the sight." In the internecine feuds that followed, during the period when Sicily was governed by the Spanish viceroys, the inhabitants were at first victorious and expelled the Spanish garrison. The aid of Louis XIV of France was sought and tentatively granted; but the wily French monarch soon abandoned the city to the cruel mercies of the Spanish oppressors. The Spanish viceroy recaptured the city and withdrew all its privileges, "picturesquely driving a plough over the site of the destroyed senatorial palace and sowing it with salt, while he left the doors of the archives of the cathedral doors open, from which he had removed all the precious documents recording the privileges accorded to Messina from the times of the East-

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ern Empire, and from Normans, Suabians, and Aragonese.”

But the traveller in Messina seeks in vain for the remains of the great temples which adorned the city during the Greek and Roman periods and concerning which Cicero wrote in such glowing terms. The numerous earthquakes which have so often overwhelmed it have left few traces of the ancient monuments. A portion of the cathedral was the oldest architectural relic in the city before the recent disaster.

The cathedral was begun by King Roger in 1098 and was consecrated a hundred years later. It was greatly damaged by a fire at the time of the obsequies of Conrad IV in 1254; the frieze of the campanile was struck by lightning in 1559; the campanile was thrown down by the earthquake of 1783, and the last earthquake left the ancient Norman pile a ruin.

It was built in the form of a basilica with a large crypt. The arches of the nave, which rested on single shafts of granite taken from earlier buildings, varied, but with a slight inclination to the horse-shoe form. There was a transverse aisle between the choir and the

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nave, but no transepts. The aisles were enriched by mosaics with representations of Christ, the Virgin, St. John, Frederick II of Aragon, and Archbishop Guidotto. The curious pulpit contained figures of Mahomet, Calvin, Luther, and Zwingli!

The gorgeously encrusted high altar, which cost three quarters of a million dollars, was erected as the receptacle of the pretended letter which the Virgin wrote to the people of Messina. A sarcophagus to the right of the high-altar contained the remains of Conrad IV and that at the left the remains of Alfonso the Generous. The holy water vessel at the entrance bore a Greek inscription recording the fact that it once supported a votive offering to *Æsculapius* and *Hygieia*, the tutelary deities of Messina. The façade was in the mixed architectural styles of the fourteenth century and was more curious than beautiful. "The renaissance architects played strange tricks with the façade, adding monuments between the doors, huge scrolls rising to a cornice in the upper part and finishing with vases, other scrolls and funny Gothic crochets standing on their tails up the gable."

An older church than the cathedral was the



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Annunziata dei Catalani, which was built on the site of a temple of Neptune and which was a mosque during the period that the Saracens occupied the city. It was originally called the church of del Castellamare, the sea-gate having been near by; but the Spaniards gave it the name by which it has been known in recent years. The columns of the interior which decorated the apse were antique. The church of San Francesco d'Assisi, which dated from the year 1251, was burned in 1884. It contained a Virgin by Antonello Gagni and a painting by the father of Antonello da Messina. Here also in an ancient Roman sarcophagus, which depicted the Rape of Proserpine, reposed the remains of Frederick III of Aragon and his mother.

Another interesting church was that of La Cattolica or Madonna del Graffeo, as it was sometimes called. It was a Norman church, but was given to the Greek clergy when they were driven from the cathedral in 1168. The church of San Agostino, with a charming Gothic portal, subsequently passed into the hands of the guild of musicians. It contained the Madonna del Popolo of Antonello Gagni and a picture of St. Cecilia by Quagliata. The church of San

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Giovanni di Malta contained the remains of St. Placidus, and it had a well whose waters had miraculous power when drunk on the 4th of August. The church of San Gregorio, with its cork-screw spire and "its interior covered with marbles in very bad taste," contained a mosaic of the Virgin and Child which dated from the twelfth century. There was a pretty Della Robbia of the Virgin and Child with a border of angels' heads, fruit, and flowers in the church of Santa Maria della Scala.

Two notable monuments were the fountains of Neptune and Orion by Montorsoli. The one of Orion was in the Piazza del Duomo in front of the cathedral. The colossal figure of the son of Neptune was surrounded by allegorical representations of the Nile, the Ebro, the Tiber, and the Camaro, the latter being a brook near Messina. The fountain of Neptune, which was located on the Marina, was even more gigantic; and while the figure of the sea-god was poorer in conception than that of Orion, the great octagonal fountain was the finer of the two. Scylla and Charybdis struggled in chains at the feet of Neptune.

The museum of Messina contained a small collection of paintings by Sicilian artists, in-

cluding the well-known altar-piece of Antonello da Messina, the best work of the master. It also contained coins, vases, busts, and sarcophagi of the Greek, Roman, and Saracen periods, and a few relics of the aboriginal Sikels. Its collection of drug-jars was much esteemed by antiquarians. Douglas Sladen says of it: "For pedigree and completeness this set is almost unrivalled. Their lustre, their blues, yellows, and greens are superb, and some of them, like the horse and nymph riding on a dolphin, are wonderfully spirited pictures."

Messina had a very ambitious Campo Santo, where the remains of the Sicilian historian La Farina (1815-1863) were interred; a university with all the faculties and related museums, laboratories, and hospitals; a handsome theatre dedicated to Vittorio Emanuele; numerous manufactures of linen, silk-stuffs, coral ornaments, and fruit essences, and a large export trade in oranges, lemons, wine, olive oil, and the essences and oils of fruit. Including its faubourgs, it had a population of one hundred and sixty thousand inhabitants before the recent earthquake disaster.

Messina has been destroyed twenty times during the past three thousand years; and how

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many times before the historic period, it would be idle to speculate. Situated as it is between *Ætna* and *Vesuvius*, and not far from the active volcano *Stromboli*, it is on a weak line of contact between the primary and secondary formations. It is distinctly in the earthquake zone; and only its superb position and natural advantages have enabled it to persist in the face of the numerous calamities which have befallen it.

In 1693 the city was almost entirely destroyed by an earthquake, and the loss of life was great. In 1740 it was visited by a fearful plague which carried away forty thousand lives. In 1783 the town was overthrown by an earthquake with considerable loss of life. Indeed, earthquakes of more or less violence continued for six months during 1780. Disturbed atmospheric conditions caused apprehension during the late autumn of 1782. The winter was unusually dry and cold; the tides no longer rose at the usual periods, and the waters about *Charybdis* raged with extraordinary fury. At noon on the fifth of February, 1783, the earth began to shake with a dreadful noise, the ground was rent, and in less than two and a half minutes most of the buildings in the city

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were overthrown, and twenty-nine thousand lives were sacrificed.

On the morning of January the 6th, 1784, the sea suddenly rose above its bed, overflowed the quays, and destroyed the few buildings on the Marina that were left standing after the earthquake of the previous year. Shocks were felt again during January and February of the year 1852, when the disturbed climatic conditions were strikingly like those which preceded the great earthquake which destroyed the city sixty-nine years before. But the city escaped.

The skill, the foresight, and the inventiveness of man are paralyzed when brought face to face with the great elemental forces which have destroyed Messina so many times. The science of seismology is still in its infancy and its conclusions necessarily vague and conflicting. Nevertheless, it has already rendered some service; and while it cannot prevent earthquakes, we may hope that with the fuller development of the science that it will be able to predict when the convulsions are likely to happen and give warning to those who will be menaced by them. Exact and scientific observations of earthquakes do not go back more than a quarter of a century; and the fact that science has already

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enabled man to conquer the sea and the air, lends hope to the wish that the destructive movements of the earth's surface may become better understood, even though they may not be conquered.

Several theories have been advanced to explain the frequency of earthquakes at Messina. Some scientists think they may be due to the generation of steam caused by water finding its way — under enormous pressures which exist at the bottom of the ocean — down to the heated portions of the earth's crust, where the pressures are sufficient to lift the superincumbent mass, or cause those sudden rearrangements which manifest themselves in the complicated and terrific oscillations known as earthquakes.

Other scientists point out the fact that millions of tons of matter are being taken down to the ocean from the mountains and deposited in the form of silt. Through the course of ages there has been a shifting of the earth's centre of gravity, and the resulting stress, acting upon a relatively thin crust of the earth, results in sudden movements of readjustment.

The fact that the disturbances at Messina and in Calabria occur along the line of the chain

of mountains has led some scientists to suggest that the earthquakes may be due to the gradual shrinking of the earth's crust, with the resulting tangential pressures which manifest themselves in wrinklings or crumplings, and that such readjustments take place along certain faults or lines of fracture. As elsewhere mentioned, the line of the earth-crust between *Ætna* and *Vesuvius* is supposed to be weak. Whenever slips occur in this zone of faulting, there is a sudden snap, an abrupt settlement, and the earth is set to quivering. As the line of fault passes beneath the Straits of Messina, a subsidence of their bottom would naturally have this effect. The waters would recede to fill the void; and then as the sea rushed in to fill it from the other end of the straits to restore the equilibrium, its momentum would naturally carry it shoreward and produce a tidal wave.

Mr. Frank Alvord Perret, an American seismologist, who predicted the recent Messina-Calabria disaster, holds a theory which is somewhat related to that just summarized. I quote from Mr. Perret:<sup>1</sup> "An earthquake is an un-

<sup>1</sup> Frank A. Perret: *The Messina Earthquake*. *The Century Magazine*, April, 1909. Vol. LXXVII, pp. 921-927.



**STREET SCENE AT MESSINA AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE.**



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dulating vibration of the ground resulting from some sudden movement of the underlying strata. This may be produced by a volcanic explosion, the breaking of a stratum of rock under strain, or the sudden intrusion of lava between the strata or into a fracture, the types respectively known as volcanic, tectonic, and inter-volcanic. My own impression in experiencing these shocks was that of a rubbing together of masses under pressure, which throws the adjoining material into vibration. If you put a little water into a thin, wide-mouthed crystal goblet, wet the finger tip, and rub it around the rim, a sound will be produced, and the water will be set in vibration, like the ground waves of an earthquake.

“ In the catastrophe of December the 28th (1908), the destructive area was very limited, extending in an elliptical form for about fifteen miles north and south of Messina. From this it follows that the focus of the disturbance was of no great depth—probably not more than twelve miles, and possibly much less. Until careful soundings have been made in the strait, nothing definite can be said as to possible changes in the bottom of the sea. Slight alterations in the line of the shore have been pro-

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duced by down-slips; but the visitor will look in vain for evidences of a great cataclysm such as the reported sinking of the Lipari islands or the disappearance of the famous rock of Scylla. It was a great earthquake, but not the greatest that man has known.

“ It will, I suppose, be generally considered that this even demonstrates the entire unexpectedness of earthquake phenomena and the impossibility of foretelling their occurrence. In reality it proves directly the opposite of this, and shows that a certain advance has been made along the line of definite, scientific prediction.” Readers interested in Mr. Perret’s prediction of the recent earthquake will find the same in an article in *Science* for August the 28th, 1908, entitled “ Some Conditions Affecting Volcanic Eruptions.”

At the early hour of twenty minutes past five on the morning of December the 28th, 1908, Messina and Calabria were visited by an earthquake that wiped from the map twenty-four towns, killed more than two hundred thousand people, wounded and demented many thousand, and destroyed millions of dollars’ worth of property. It was easily the greatest disaster in history.

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Although I was in Sicily at the time of the disaster and talked with scores of the survivors, it is by no means an easy matter to give a clear account of the catastrophe, since individuals who were actors in the fatal drama differ so essentially in their descriptions of just what happened during the few seconds between five twenty and five twenty-one.

Some said the sensation was like that which a rat must feel when shaken by a terrier; some compared it to the movement which one might feel while rolling down a steep hill in a barrel; many said that they felt as if they were being rapidly pulled back and forth and as violently thrown into the air; and many described the movement as rocking or rolling and accompanied with nauseating effects.

One survivor who was awake at the moment of the catastrophe described it as a violent shuffling of every movable object in the room, including himself, accompanied by terrifying roars and subterranean thunder-claps. Many report that their first consciousness of impending danger came with the sudden upward and downward movement of the bed and of the apparent swaying of the buildings. Most of the survivors, however, emphasize the violent

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vertical movements which accompanied the first paroxysms.

While the fatal shocks were of brief duration, many people reached the streets only to be killed by falling stones and timbers or smothered by the pulverized débris which filled the streets to a depth of ten to twenty feet. Thousands were found on the streets and pavements buried beneath a rubble of mortar, brick, and stones. The violent vertical motion lifted the great solid structures high in the air and the accompanying horizontal motion ground the thick walls into a mass of rubble which fell to the earth in all directions. The solid walls of the great business blocks were literally pulverized and thousands were buried as in a colossal sand storm.

A great tidal wave, preceded by a considerable subsidence of the waters in the harbour, swept over the Marina and the lower parts of the city and rolled for miles inland over the lower portions of the surrounding country. Submarine cables were broken and at the moment of the receding of the waters vessels rested upon the bottom of the bay. Heavy rainfall followed in the train of the earthquake and continued for five days. This prevented the



THE MARINA AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE.

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fires which might have cost even more lives, but it delayed and complicated the work of rescue.

The work of rescue was necessarily slow and many who were wedged between falling timbers died from continuous suffering before they could be released. English and Russian war vessels were the first to appear, and they laboured heroically until organized help from Palermo, Naples, and other cities could systematically take up the work of succour. Three Russian marines found several women and children clinging to the remnant of a fourth-story floor attached to the façade of a building that had not fallen. There were no ladders; but by means of ropes and a pick one of the marines climbed the wall and with his rope lowered the women and children, and then climbed down himself. As one of the naked children was being wrapped in the coat of a sailor, the great wall suddenly fell and killed women, children, and marines. This was one of the difficulties which attended the work of rescue. Walls that were left standing by the first destructive movements were so weakened that they became veritable death-traps for the brave men who engaged in the rescue cause.



Hundreds were taken alive from suffocating masses of conglomerated brick, stone, timbers, and mortar, but many of them were horribly maimed and some were entirely demented. The proportion of the rescued who were insane as the result of the calamity was frightful. The professional classes were killed in vastly greater proportions than the artisans, due doubtless to the fact that at this early hour large numbers of the latter were already up and about their labours, and many had already gone to the country for the day's tasks. The number of adults who perished was also much greater than the mortality of the children. This places an additional load on the philanthropy of Sicily to rear and care for a large army of fatherless and motherless children.

The great depth of the débris required endless labour to uncover those parts of the city from which piteous cries issued. In one case it required the labour of thirty men for forty-seven hours to rescue one man who was buried many feet under pulverized building material. In some instances metal pipes had to be forced through the powdered débris; and through these tubes liquid food was brought within the reach of starving men and women until

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the work of disentanglement might be completed.

The power of endurance displayed by the hundreds of buried men, women and children was simply incredible. To cite a few of many cases that came to my notice: A business man happened to be in Triest at the time of the earthquake. Upon learning of the disaster he started immediately for Messina. When he reached the destroyed city he was told that his wife and children had been rescued and sent to Naples. When he reached Naples he was informed that they had been sent to Rome. At Rome he learned that they had probably perished. He returned to Messina with some workmen, located his house, and eight days after the earthquake, his wife and children were rescued alive.

Where several living persons were entombed together they took turns in calling in the hope that their voices might be heard. Rescue parties as they went about their labours called in loud voices "any one there." In one instance a party heard the cry "Maria, Maria." After many hours of digging the owner of the voice proved to be nothing more nor less than a hungry parrot. The impulse of the rescuers was

to terminate the life of the bird, but they noticed the movement of a hand. Two women were buried in the plaster on the floor; and, although they were so near death that they were not conscious of their rescuers, with food they were revived.

A priest was buried under such a mass of powdered débris, his face only being exposed. A cat was entombed in the room with him, but it was free. The third day it attacked the ear of the priest, but fortunately help came at the critical moment. An instance came to my attention of a woman who was buried in a sleeping room a week before she was rescued, the door having been blocked by falling timbers. She had no food, and during her imprisonment she gave birth to twins. When she was found both she and the twins were strong and well. Two children who were entombed for eighteen days subsisted on an onion and a small bottle of wine; and since my return to America, I have heard of persons who were dug out alive twenty-three days after the date of the earthquake.

Many of those disentombed had no notion of the time that they had been buried, and few of them thought it so long as it actually was. Most of them were apparently stunned by the

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calamity, and doubtless very many died from the tremendous force of the shock. Indeed many who were buried for days said that they seemed to be insensitive to pain. They were momentarily mentally dazed; and as already pointed out, the number of the survivors, deranged and distracted in mind, was very great.

The city was practically razed to the ground and many thickly settled sections were reduced to dust. Façades of buildings here and there withstood the shocks and a few frame structures were left intact. But in the great city of nearly one hundred and sixty thousand inhabitants, practically all of the survivors were left homeless. How many perished in Messina will never be known with any degree of exactness. Certainly more than a hundred thousand.

Churches, schools, hospitals, museums, libraries, university, cathedral, monuments, factories, barracks — practically everything in Messina that was perishable — disappeared in the short space of thirty-one seconds. Catastrophes such as this stagger the imagination because of the colossal scale of the ruins. Falling upon a poor country like Sicily the blow was keenly felt and the sympathy and material aid of the civilized world were deeply appreciated.

Messina will be rebuilt because its harbour is too valuable to be abandoned. But the new Messina should take into account the extreme sensitiveness of the spot to seismic disturbances, and erect only such buildings as will withstand the frequent vibrations of the ground. This is done in Japan and the scheme is altogether feasible here. At any rate all that is possible should be done to spare the world from a repetition of the dreadful catastrophe of December the 28th, 1908.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### TAORMINA AND CATANIA

Superb location of Taormina — The outlook — Naxos, the oldest Greek settlement in Sicily — Its early history — Beginnings of Taormina — The nearby mountains — The Greco-Roman theatre — Gothic palaces — The Badia Vecchia — Aci Reale — Catania — Frequent destruction of the city — Relation to Mount Aetna — Industries — Ancient monuments — The cathedral — Tombs of the kings of the House of Aragon — The Benedictine monastery — Public squares — The city, a centre of letters and art.

TAORMINA has the most superb position of any place in Sicily, and this is saying much when one recalls the splendid sites of a dozen cities on the island — locations that are not excelled for magnificence by any other country in the world. It is sufficient to say that the spot was selected by the Greeks, who have never been surpassed in the choice of sites for cities. The vast expanse of the Ionian sea lies six hundred feet below; a few miles to the south towers Ætna, the pillar of heaven, as Pindar called it; to the north, in the background beyond Reggio, loom the serrated ridges of the Apen-

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nines, and above the town at no great distance hangs Mola, like an eagle's nest on the cliff of a precipitous crag.

The beautiful sweep from the ancient theatre has been thus described by Goethe: "On the right and on the high rocks at the side, castles tower in the air; farther on, the city lies below you, and although its buildings are all of modern date, still similar ones, no doubt, stood of old on the same site. After this the eye falls on the whole of the long ridge of *Ætna*, then on the left it catches a view of the seashore as far as Catania, and even Syracuse, and then the wide and extensive view is closed by the immense smoking volcano, but not horribly, for the atmosphere, with its softening effect, makes it look more distant and milder than it really is. If you now turn from this view towards the passage running at the back of the spectators, you have on the left the whole wall of rock between which and the sea runs the road to Messina. And then again you behold vast groups of rocky ridges in the sea itself, with the coast of Calabria in the far distance, which only a fixed and attentive gaze can distinguish from the clouds which rise rapidly from it."

Taormina presents a greater variety of



TAORMINA.



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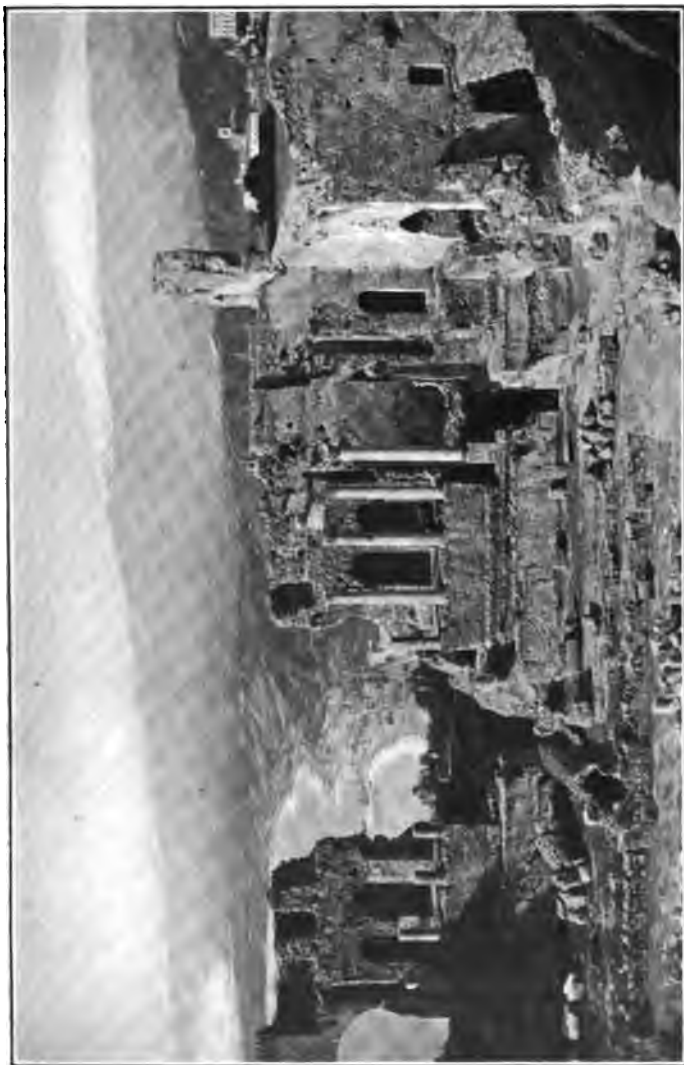
scenic effects than any other spot with which I am familiar; and there are at least two, as Alexandre Dumas has pointed out, that can never be forgotten. The one is at evening “when the sun is setting behind *Ætna* and the shadow of the great mountain is cast upon the Calabrian hills, the forests and uplands glowing with purples melting into blues and violets into crimson,” and the other is in the morning “when the sun rises from the Ionian sea, touches the cone of the crater for an instant with a rosy glow, and makes you think that it is the nipple of the breast of the world.”

Near-by on the sea is the site of the ancient city of *Naxos* — the first Greek colony in Sicily. It was founded in 735 B. C. by Chalcidians of *Eubœa*, and grew so rapidly that it was soon able to establish outposts at *Catania* and *Leontini*. For a time independent, it was later brought under the influence of the tyrant of *Gela*. Again recovering its independence, it flourished for a period; waged a successful war against *Messina*, and rendered the sister city-state of *Syracuse* material aid at the time of the Athenian invasion. But in 403 *Naxos* was captured by *Dionysius*, the tyrant of *Syracuse*, and the city completely destroyed.

mina. A large part of the scena and several of the Corinthian pillars are preserved, but it is disfigured by the brick-restorations of the Romans. The acoustic properties of the theatre were so perfect that sounds uttered on the proscenium in a low tone of voice were distinctly heard at the top of the rear wall. The dressing-rooms on each side of the stage and the passages under the stage used by the prompter are well preserved. Its large seating capacity — thirty thousand spectators — confirms the statements of Strabo as to the great population of the city in ancient times.

The greatest diameter of the theatre is three hundred and fifty-seven feet and that of the orchestra one hundred and twenty-six feet. The Roman theatre at Orange, in the south of France, is the only ancient home of the drama that I have met in my travels that is in a more perfect state of preservation. And, but for the greed of a local duke during the Bourbon period, the Greco-Roman theatre at Taormina might be as perfect to-day as the one at Orange. But the penurious Duke of San Stefano was allowed to carry away the choicest marbles as decorations for his palace.

There are a few other choice bits of old archi-



RUINS OF THE GRECO-ROMAN THEATRE AT TAORMINA.

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ecture at Taormina. Some of the palaces have picturesque battlements and graceful cornice-friezes. The Palazzo Corvaia, said to have been built by the kings of Aragon, has some exquisitely shafted Gothic windows and some interesting but decaying frescoes, and on the stairway are some curious reliefs of Adam and Eve. The Palazzo Ciampoli is probably the oldest existing palace at Taormina. It is built in the late Gothic and renaissance styles of architecture, and has some interesting cinque-foil battlements, a graceful north window, and a broad and picturesque flight of steps.

But the Badia Vecchia, which dates from the thirteenth century, is the finest Gothic ruin at Taormina. Its biforate pointed windows are regarded by artists as the finest of their kind in existence. It stands on the overhanging rocks amid thick clusters of the prickly-pear; and, seen from a distance, its broad tower, pierced with the exquisite Gothic windows, presents a melancholy but lovely scene. It was long used as a convent for nuns.

There are other picturesque bits at Taormina, some of which date back to the Greek and Roman periods, as the ancient reservoirs for water and the vestiges of what might have been

a temple of Apollo; but the interesting bits of humanity — the ragged, careless human types, often as beautiful in face and figure as the plastic representations of the ancient Greeks — and the superb expanse of rugged mountains and peaceful sea add quite as much to the joys of the traveller's recollections to this unsurpassed scenic spot. "It is at once the nature of dreamland and reality," writes the late Augustus J. C. Hare. "You see what you may only have dreamed of, and you will certainly dream long afterwards of that which you see. The genius of the spot perfects both. There are gorges of red and grey rock; there are the green crags far above, and the sea, with islets girt with foam, far below; and then out beyond, west, everything is silvery; for there are the gently descending ridges, one after another, blossoming with fruit-trees, veil upon veil, fainter and fainter, and with the pearl-white sky above, making one wide and splendid frame, in which rises up grandly the silent, snow-mantled Ætna, pouring just a little white breath to the Gods of the upper air."

The shore line near Taormina is wild and rugged; but as Aci Reale is approached, the lava plains and marshes come into view. Aci

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Reale, the place where Theocritus has Acis woo the beautiful Galatea, is built on several different lava-streams. Near its warm mineral spring there are the remains of an ancient Roman bath; and not far away are the picturesque ruins of a Norman castle. Here in the sea are the Cyclops, the rocky islets which appealed so strongly to the imagination of Homer, Virgil, and the other early writers.

Catania is nobly situated on the roots of Mount Ætna, which has been both the despoiler and the benefactor of the city. It has so often been buried under the lava streams from the Mount of Mounts that most of its Greek and Roman monuments are under ground. It is, therefore, another Herculaneum.

Catania was founded in 730 B. C. as an outpost of Naxos, and rose rapidly to prosperity. It was captured by Hieron I in 476 B. C., and the inhabitants were removed to Leontini. He re-peopled it with five thousand inhabitants from Syracuse and the same number from the Peloponnesus and changed its name to Ætna. But after the death of the tyrant the exiles returned and the city was again given its original name. For a brief period it was under the rule of Dionysius; subsequently local tyrants con-



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trolled it for many years; in the time of Agathocles it became subject to Syracuse, and at the close of the first Punic War it passed into the hands of the Romans, and became one of the most populous Roman cities in Sicily.

Catania was destroyed in 121 B. C. by an eruption of *Ætna*, and it suffered greatly during the civil wars between Sextus Pompeius and Octavian. The city accepted the Christian religion in 44 A. D., as a result of the missionary labours of St. Berillo, whom St. Paul had sent to Catania for the purpose. It was captured by the Vandals in 253 and retaken by Belisarius for the Byzantines in 534. Three hundred and forty years later it passed into the hands of the Saracens, and in 1060 it was captured by Roger, the Norman count. The city was almost completely destroyed by an earthquake in 1169; by a plague in 1423; by a lava-stream in 1669, and again by an earthquake in 1693.

In spite of the fact that the veil of Santa Agatha is held in superstitious awe by most of the inhabitants of Catania, its miracle-working power has been nil in the face of the great calamities which have so repeatedly visited the city. *Ætna* is the absorbing object of interest at Catania. Not only does one get the noblest



CATANIA WITH AETNA IN THE BACKGROUND.

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view of the Mount of Mounts from the leading thoroughfare — the Strada Etnea — but the streets are paved with lava, houses and churches are built of lava, furniture and a variety of useful things are manufactured from lava, and the mole that defends the harbour from the fury of the tempests is constructed of lava. It is indeed a phoenix arisen from its own ashes.

Catania is a city of 150,000 inhabitants; and, since the destruction of Messina, the second largest city in Sicily. It is the seat of a bishopric, a court of appeal, and a university. Its trade in sulphur, cotton, wine, grain, and almonds is important, and it has several manufactures of silk fabrics, amber and lava-wares. Its shipping is large when the fact is recalled that at the time of the last destruction of the city the harbour was partly filled up by the lava. The Ursino Castello, which was built by Frederick II in 1232 to overawe the rebellious inhabitants, stood originally on an island; but the eruption of 1669 connected it with the mainland.

The ancient monuments of Catania are chiefly under ground, having been buried by subsequent streams of lava, and few of them have

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been uncovered. The Greek theatre, where Alcibiades persuaded the Catanians to join the unholy league of Athens against Syracuse, has been partly excavated. It was greatly modified by the Romans, however, and presents few of its original features. The same is true of the Odeum which is above ground. The large Roman amphitheatre, which is under the city, has been excavated as far as practicable. Its long diameter was four hundred and fourteen feet and its short diameter three hundred and forty-eight feet and it accommodated fifteen thousand spectators.

The cathedral, which was built by Count Roger in 1092, was destroyed by the earthquake of 1169, burying the bishop and the congregation. It was rebuilt; and after the earthquake of 1693 it was re-dedicated to Santa Agatha, her claims having been decided by lot to be superior to those of the Virgin. The white marble with which the cathedral is adorned and the six granite columns in the façade came from the Greek theatre. It is in the form of a Latin cross but has been greatly modernized. The chapel of the virgin martyr Santa Agatha is the most important. It contains her remains, her miraculous veil, and the crown adorned



PIAZZA DEL DUOMO AND CATHEDRAL AT CATANIA.

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with precious stone, which was presented by Richard Cœur-de-Lion. The latter is a beautiful example of the goldsmith's art during the fourteenth century. The choir stalls, dating from the sixteenth century, also depict the story of the tutelary saint. On the 5th of February each year her relics, at the head of a vast procession, are conveyed through the city with great pomp and ceremony.

The cathedral contains the tombs of a number of the Sicilian kings and princes of the House of Aragon, including Frederick II and his son John of Randazzo, Ferdinand III and his wife Constance, and Queen Maria, wife of Martin I, and her son Frederick. It also contains the tomb of Vincenzo Bellini, the Sicilian composer. In front of the cathedral, where a temple dedicated to Pallas once stood, there is a figure of an elephant in lava, bearing on its back an Egyptian obelisk of granite. The elephant is very ancient, having been found in the Roman circus.

The most sightly point in Catania is the suppressed Benedictine monastery of San Nicolò, removed hither from Nicolosi in 1515. It has two large courts, now used for barracks, the city museum and library, the observatory, and



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certain of the laboratories of the university. When it was suppressed its annual revenues exceeded one hundred thousand dollars. The cloister encloses a Saracenic-looking pavilion, and several of the columns are of remarkably fine verd antique. The great baroque church, the largest in Sicily, with an unfinished façade, contains an organ built by Donato del Piano, which is generally regarded as one of the finest in Europe. Its pious builder asked as his only payment that he might be buried under his masterpiece.

For centuries the monks of San Nicolò lived at the highest habitable limit of Mount Ætna, where their rule was very severe. A grandson of Count Roger had selected the spot and founded the monastery on the pious supposition that the prayers of the monks would exorcise the wrath of the volcano. "But as all things weaken in the long run," the Benedictine rule lost its vigour. At first the monks came to Catania to live only during the summer; but finding it a more comfortable place of abode, they eventually made it their permanent residence, until the government thought fit to suppress the order and put its building and vast resources to more profitable uses.

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Catania has broad streets and numerous large public squares — the Piazza Mazzini with a colonnade of thirty antique columns; the Piazza del Duomo, containing the antique elephant in lava already referred to; the Piazza Stesicoro, with the handsome monument to Bellini; the Piazza Dante in front of the suppressed Benedictine monastery; the Piazza Martiri near the harbour, and the Piazza Bellini in front of the Teatro Bellini.

The city has long held important rank as a centre of letters and art. It was long the residence of Stesichorus, one of the chief lyric poets during the Greek period. It had a theatre for tragedy and comedy and an odeum for music; also a naumachia for naval shows and a hippodrome for the Olympic games. Its academy and gymnasium were at one period the most celebrated in Sicily. Charondas, the great jurist, whose laws were accepted at Messina, Naxos, Leontini, and Himera, was a native of Catania, and he was one of the earliest advocates of free public education.

After the foundation of the university of Catania by Alfonso the Magnificent, Catania became under the Aragonese rulers the literary metropolis of the island. The Academy of Sci-

ence at Catania, founded in 1823, has taken a leading part in the study of the geology, geography, and the seismology of Sicily. Vincenzo Bellini, the first Sicilian creative tone-artist, was a native of the city, also his father and brother, who were composers of church music of local note.

## CHAPTER XIX

### SYRACUSE: ANCIENT AND MODERN

Greatness of Syracuse in ancient times — The island of Ortygia — Sikel settlers displaced by the Greeks — Gelon the first tyrant — A half century of democracy — The tyranny of Dionysius I — His political prisons — The ear of Dionysius — Prosperity of the city during his reign — The mild rule of Timoleon — Agathocles and the decline of Syracuse — Hieron and the Roman conquest — Original Greek quarters of the city — Historic monuments — The fountain of Arethusa — The cathedral — Achradina — Tyche — The Neapolis — The ruins of the Greek theatre — The Roman amphitheatre — The latomia of Syracuse — The catacombs — The Epipolae and the fortress of Euryelus — The river Anapo and the papyrus plant — Temple of Zeus Olympius — Archimedes.

WHILE not the first Greek city in Sicily in point of settlement, Syracuse was the greatest, and not only the greatest city of Sicily and all Hellas, but for several centuries the greatest city in the world. Its historic significance likewise is surpassed by few if any other cities. Mr. Freeman remarks in this connection: "There can hardly be a doubt that the later Syracuse, the Syracuse of Dionysius and Timoleon and the later Hieron — in Syracusan his-

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tory the tyrant, the deliverer, and the paternal king, must be thus strangely bracketed — was in extent the greatest of contemporary Greek cities, the greatest of contemporary European cities. Whether its actual area was or was not greater than that of Rome or Athens, it must certainly have been a longer journey from one end of the city to the other. At Syracuse, as at Babylon, it might be needful to tell her master that the city was taken at one end. And the historical position of Syracuse was fully equal to its physical extent. The recorded history of Syracuse must be quite equal in bulk to the recorded history of Athens. The political revolutions of Syracuse affected the world in general quite as much as the political revolutions of Athens did. Each city fulfilled a kindred mission at the two ends of the Grecian world. If Athens was the champion of Hellas against Persia, Syracuse was no less the champion of Hellas against Carthage. The greatest victory of each over their several barbarian enemies was won at the same time; men loved to say, truly or falsely, that they were won on the same day. Other Greek colonies were the seats of mighty commonwealths and mighty tyrannies, but no other colony was the seat of



HARBOUR OF SYRACUSE.

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commonwealth or tyranny so mighty that it could, with some show of reason, claim to place its force on a level with the forces of Athens and Sparta put together.”

The present city of Syracuse only covers the island of Ortygia, which is an elliptical projection of the Tertiary plateau. A peninsula stretches forward from the plateau toward the point of the island, thus forming the protected harbour of Porto Grande. North of the island is a smaller and less protected basin, the Porto Piccolo, on the edge of which the dockyards of the ancient Greeks may still be recognized. The entrance to the great harbour is less than three-quarters of a mile. It covers a relatively large surface area and is very deep; and in the almost land-locked waters of the Porta Grande, many of the greatest naval battles of ancient times were fought. The island of Ortygia contains less than one hundred and twenty-five acres; but the surrounding table land and marshes, which became an integral part of the city in the time of the tyrants, contained more than seven thousand acres.

The island had been occupied by the Sikels, but with the coming of Achias and a band of Corinthians in 734 B. C. the aborigines were



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driven to the mainland. "Sikel inhabitants still lived in the territory which has become Syracusan," notes Freeman, "in the character of subjects tilling for foreign masters the land which had once been their own." For a long time the government was conducted by the descendants of the original settlers. The prosperity of the city was so great that colonies were established at Enna (the present Castrogiovanni), Acrae (the present Palazzolo), and Camarina.

In 485 B. C., Gelon, the son of the tyrant at Gela, availed himself of internal dissensions at Syracuse and made himself master of the city. Many of the inhabitants of Gela were taken to Syracuse by the tyrant, and he greatly increased the importance of his new capital by a signal victory over the Carthagenians at Himera. He was a man of moderation and his reign of seven years marks the beginning of the brilliant rôle which Syracuse so long played in the history of Sicily. Gelon was succeeded by his brother Hieron I (478-467 B. C.), who in the great battle at Cumae broke the naval power of the Etruscans. While more despotic in his rule than his brother he introduced the system of royal patronage to philosophers and men of letters

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which has given so much reflected glory to the history of Syracuse. Æschylus and Pindar were both members of his court, and he maintained friendly relations with Xenophanes, Epicharmus, and Simonides. Pindar, it will be recalled, has immortalized his love of magnificence and his victories at Olympia and Delphi.

For a half century following the death of Hieron Syracuse was a democracy; but the Athenian invasion, although unsuccessful, made sad inroads on the prosperity of the city. Shortly after this event, "the most important in Greek history known to us," as Thucydides observes, Syracuse again became the prey of a tyrant. Dionysius I (406-370 B. C.) was born of low station, but having associated himself with the aristocratic party and distinguished himself in the wars against Hannibal, he availed himself of the discontent which followed the disasters at Selinus, Himera, and Akragas, and secured the place of the defeated generals and thereby made himself tyrant of Syracuse.

He augmented the army; doubled the pay of the troops, and converted the island of Ortygia into a strong fortress; and, after concluding peace with Carthage, he began the conquest of the Greek colonies in Sicily. Naxos, Ca-

tania, and Leontini were annexed; but at this juncture Syracuse was again besieged by the Carthagenians, and his conquest of the island was momentarily arrested. The Carthagenian troops, however, were decimated by a fever which broke out among them and the tyrant was able to secure peace with his alien foe and continue the subjugation of the Greek cities in Sicily and Italy. He became master of the Mediterranean and Adriatic seas; and for a period of twenty years he enjoyed greater power than any other Greek ruler before the time of Alexander the Great.

But he was forced to turn one of the great stone-quarries (*latomia*) into a political prison to prevent the rebellious citizens from dethroning him. Cicero says of this *latomia*: "It is a vast work and a splendid; the work of old kings and tyrants. The whole of it is cut out of rock excavated to a marvellous depth and carved out by the labour of great multitudes of men. Nothing can either be made or imagined so closed against all escape, so hedged in on all sides, so safe for keeping prisoners in."

In the *Latomia del Paradiso*, a quarry hewn in the rock to a depth of more than a hundred feet, is the renowned ear of Dionysius. A cave

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is quarried in the rock that simulates a gigantic human ear and possesses extraordinary acoustic properties. It is in the form of the letter S, more than two hundred feet in length, seventy-five feet high, and from fifteen to thirty feet wide. It contracts toward the summit and the slightest sound may be heard at the upper end. In this latomia Dionysius is reputed to have imprisoned men of distinction who were victims of his suspicious fears; and to have stationed himself in a chamber that was approached from the plateau above that he might learn the secrets of his prisoners.

Dionysius adorned Syracuse with numerous temples and patronized letters and philosophy liberally. He had an itch for authorship, his mania being poetry, and his ambition was to win the prize at the Olympian games. In spite of the fact that his earlier literary efforts were hissed, he persevered in his courtship of the muses until one of his tragedies won the coveted prize. Plato was invited to his court and one day the conversation turned on the subject of tyranny. The great philosopher argued that tyranny was incompatible with virtue, whereupon Dionysius remarked, "You speak like a madman," "And you like a tyrant," retorted

Plato. It is needless to point out that the philosopher terminated his visit to Syracuse.

Dionysius II, who was brought up at his father's court in luxury and idleness, was so altogether unacquainted with public affairs that he was guided in the government of Syracuse first by Dion and for a brief period by Plato. He was later displaced by Dion and repaired to Locri, the native city of his mother, where he was hospitably received; but he soon usurped the power of the town and treated the inhabitants with great cruelty. Eleven years later, during dissensions at Syracuse, he returned and made himself master of the situation, but he was shortly driven out by Timoleon.

Timoleon (343-337 B. C.) had been sent from Corinth to deliver the Syracusans from the tyranny of Dionysius. After this task was accomplished he destroyed the citadel which had been the bulwark of the tyrants, and inaugurated a period of prosperity. This was shortly interrupted by the invasion of Sicily by Hamilcar at the head of a vast Carthaginian army. Timoleon, with a small army, marched against the barbarians and won a great victory at the river Crimissus. He then carried the war into Africa and forced the Carthaginians to con-

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clude peace. The city then enjoyed another period of peace. Timoleon led the simple life and declined titles and honours as a ruler; but when he died he was given a public funeral, a monument was erected in his memory, and annual games were instituted in his honour.

With the death of Timoleon the independence of Syracuse began to decline; and Agathocles (317-289 B. C.), who had raised himself from the humble potter's craft, became the tyrant of the city and the virtual ruler of Sicily. When he took the oath of office he had declared that he would not interfere with the democracy; but as soon as he had gotten hold of the reins of the government he murdered four thousand citizens and banished six thousand more. In a few years most of the Greek city-states recognized his sovereignty. He met his first great defeat at Himera at the hands of Hamilcar and a Carthaginian army, although he subsequently carried the war into Africa and forced the barbarians to sue for peace.

The next important tyrant was Hieron II (270-216 B. C.), a noble Syracusan descended from Gelon. The Mamertines, as they called themselves, were mercenaries who had been employed by the Syracusan tyrants in their

wars against the other Greek colonies and against the Carthagenians. But they had grown so turbulent and exacting that they had been expelled from the city. They called upon the Romans to come to their aid. Hieron was defeated by the Romans and forced to conclude a peace treaty which gave them a foot-hold in Sicily. He was followed by his grandson Hieronymus, who broke the alliance with Rome and cast his lot with Carthage. Marcellus, at the head of a strong Roman force, besieged Syracuse; and, after a stubborn resistance of nearly two years, the Greeks were forced to surrender; and in 212 the proud Hellenic city became an outpost of Rome.

Under the Greeks the boundaries had been extended with the growth of the city to include, besides Ortygia, four quarters on the mainland — Acradina, Tyche, the Neapolis, and the Epipolae; and its population has been variously stated from five hundred thousand to a million. Most of the existing remains belong to the Greek period; for the city dwindled greatly under the Romans, and none of the foreign nations that have since governed Sicily have shown any favours to Syracuse. It has an excellent harbour and some trade in oil, wine, and

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olives; but its population to-day is less than twenty-eight thousand and is confined to the small island of Ortygia.

The important historic monuments at Ortygia are a few insignificant vestiges of a temple to Diana; some ancient Doric columns in the cathedral, which occupies the site of the temple of Minerva; the famous fountain of the nymph Arethusa, and a castle at the extreme point of the island generally attributed to Maniaces, a Byzantine general.

According to legend, Arethusa was one of the beautiful and blushing nymphs of Artemis, who one day, while hunting the roebuck, ran dishevelled and breathless from the forest to the banks of a stream. First she waded into its cool waters; and then unfastening her tunic she plunged into its deeper parts. To her astonishment she felt the water "quivering with love and caressing her as though it had a soul." Then she heard a noise, and instantly took flight. But she was pursued by Alpheus. She ran over plowed fields and through thick forests, over mountains and through meadows, but always followed by the lover. At last wearied with long running she called upon Artemis, the goddess of chastity, who wrapped her in a cloud



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just as Alpheus was about to clasp her in his arms. A subterranean passage was opened for her feet and she made her way under the sea to Sicily, where she came to the surface on the island of Ortygia as a fresh water spring, over which she has ever since presided.

The sacred fountain has been surrounded by modern masonry, which gives the appearance of a bear-pit; papyrus grows luxuriantly in its waters, and the sacred fish of the ancients — the grey mullet — sport in the spring as in olden times. Perhaps the justification of the ugly enclosure is the fact that the fountain was long degraded to the vile office of a public wash-tub. Arethusa was celebrated in the songs of ancient minstrelsy and honoured in choice specimens of numismatic art. Readers will recall Shelley's dainty poem, "Arethusa."

The cathedral occupies a spot that has been used continuously for religious purposes since the settlement of the island by the Greeks seven hundred and thirty-four years before the birth of Christ, and it may have been used even earlier by the Sikels for the same purpose. Indeed portions of the present structure belong to the original temple of Minerva which the cathedral displaced. When the Saracens captured the



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city in the year 878 A. D. they converted it into a mosque, and their battlements still crown the Doric entablature on one side of the building.

Achradina is on the high ground of the peninsula north of Ortygia. A portion of this quarter is on the limestone ledge and a part on the lower ground about the small harbour. Here was located the market, a temple to Zeus Olympius, and a gymnasium with colonnades which contained the tomb of Timoleon; but all its ancient buildings have disappeared.

Tyche was the quarter of Syracuse northwest of Achradina. It took its name from the temple of Tyche (Fortune) and it was long one of the most populous parts of the city. It occupied the high ground and touched the sea at the harbour of Trigolos.

The Neapolis was southwest of Achradina. At the time of the Athenian siege it was only a suburb, but it later became the centre of the public life of the city. Here the finest temples and the chief theatres were located. The Greek theatre, which exists in ruins, is nearly semi-circular in form and is hewn from the solid rock. It was erected in the fifth century before Christ and was one of the largest play-houses of antiquity. It was nearly five hundred feet

in diameter and could seat twenty-four thousand people.

Here some of the great tragedies of Æschylus had their first representation; many of Pindar's poems were read here for the first time; and here on occasions of great national crises the tyrants addressed the people. "The Greek theatre, in its utter solitude, with its grey stones worn to the likeness of rocks and overgrown with candytuft and hawkweed, and its exquisitely lovely view, is perhaps the most touching and attractive of all the Syracusan ruins." Gregorovius remarks: "Here once sat Plato, Æschylus, Aristippus, Pindar; in the orchestra there once stood the captive Athenians; here spoke Timoleon, and here he sat as a blind old man listening to the debates on state affairs. The theatre performed a double purpose, as the stage where great dramas and the city's affairs were alike enacted."

The Nymphæum, a grotto supplied by an aqueduct constructed by Carthagenian prisoners, adjoins the Greek theatre. Near-by is the famous Street of the Tombs — Strada dei Sepolcri — with deep chariot ruts in the centre of the streets and tomb-chambers on the sides cut in the solid rock in lunette-shaped recesses.

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The Roman amphitheatre probably dates from the time of Augustus. In the middle of the arena there is a cistern, said to have been filled with crocodiles which fed on the bodies of the slain. It had a balustrade wall of marble and the names of the owners of the seats were indicated on the edge of the arena. It was the largest amphitheatre in Sicily, being two hundred and twenty feet long and one hundred and thirty-two feet wide.

Of the numerous latomia at Syracuse that of the Cappuccini is the largest, the wildest, and the most historic. It was here that the seven thousand Athenians languished after the failure of the attack on Syracuse, to which reference has already been made in an earlier chapter. Mr. Symonds very truly says: "The Latomia de' Cappuccini is a place which it is impossible to describe in words, and of which no photograph can give any notion. Sunk to the depth of a hundred feet below the level of the soil, with sides perpendicular and in many places as smooth as though the chisel had just passed over them, these vast excavations produce the impression of some subterranean gallery, widening here and there into spacious halls, the whole of which has been unroofed and

opened to the air of heaven. It is a solemn and romantic labyrinth, where no winds blow rudely, and where orange trees shoot upward luxuriantly to meet the light. The wild fig bursts from the living rock, mixed with lentisk-shrubs and pendent caper plants. Old olives split the masses of fallen cliff with their tough, snake-like, slowly corded and compacted roots. Thin flames of pomegranate flowers gleam amid foliage of lustrous green; and lemons drop unheeded from the femininely fragile branches. There, too, the ivy hangs in long festoons, waving like tapestry to the breath of stealthy breezes; while under foot is a tangle of acanthus, thick curling leaves of glossiest green, surmounted by spikes of dull lilac blossoms. Wedges and columns and sharp teeth of the native rock rear themselves here and there in the midst of the open spaces to the sky, worn fantastically into notches and saws by the action of sirocco. A light yellow calcined by the sun to white is the prevailing colour of the quarries.”<sup>1</sup>

The catacombs of Syracuse are the largest and most curious in existence. That of San

<sup>1</sup>John Addington Symonds: *Sketches in Italy and Greece*. London, 1879.

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Giovanni has been attributed in turn to Greeks, Romans, and Saracens, to pagans, Christians, and Moslems. "One suddenly finds oneself in a regularly organized city of the dead, where whole peoples appear to have slumbered in their stone coffins," remarks Gregorovius in his *Wanderungen in Sicilien*. "Here are countless streets and alleys, endless chambers, niches, spaces, and halls, once inhabited by the dead in deepest peace, whilst above them raged the revolutions of the living." Undoubtedly the catacombs were originally quarries like the *latomia*, but ultimately they were adapted as burial places. The walls of the regular chambers, as well as the floor, are full of tombs, and even the pillars are ornamented with the tiny tombs of babies. Here and there on the tombs one recognizes the peacock, the symbol of immortality, the palm, the symbol of martyrdom, and other early Christian emblems.

The Epipolæ on the high ground above Acradina, Tyche, and the Neapolis, was the fifth quarter of the city. Dionysius I surrounded it by walls and made Syracuse the most strongly fortified city in the ancient world. According to Diodorus, with the aid of six thousand masons and as many oxen and a vast number of



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labourers, he erected a wall seven miles long in the short space of twenty days, at the time of a threatened Carthaginian invasion. Traces of the outer wall show that in places it was nine feet thick. The fortress of Euryelus, located within the enclosure, is the finest known example of a great Greek fortress, and it is still in a tolerable state of preservation. Mr. Symonds points out that "a little repair would make it even now a substantial place of defence, according to Greek tactics. Its deep foss is cut in the solid rock, and furnished with subterranean magazines for the storage of provisions. The three piles of solid masonry, on which the drawbridge rested, still stand in the centre of this ditch. The oblique grand entrance to the foss descends by a flight of well-cut steps. The rock itself, over which the fort was raised, is honeycombed with excavated passages for infantry and cavalry, of different width and height, so that one sort can be assigned to mounted horsemen and another to foot soldiers. The trap-doors, which led from these galleries into the fortress, are provided with rests for ladders, that could be let down to help a sallying force, or drawn up to impede an advancing enemy. The inner court for

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stabled horses and the stations for the catapults are still in tolerable preservation." Thus the whole internal arrangement of the fortress can still be distinctly traced.

The river Anapo, upon whose marshy banks the papyrus still flourishes, empties its waters into the large harbour. This is the only place in the world outside of Egypt where the paper-plant grows wild. Tradition states that the original plants were a present to Hieron of Syracuse from Ptolemy Philadelphus. The roots of the papyrus are bulbous and suck up moisture and nourishment by means of thin fibres which are attached to the sides and the bottom of the river. From each separation of the bulbs there springs a bright green triangular rush to a height of ten or twelve feet, at the end of which there is a filament of delicate flowers. It grows abundantly for a number of miles along the marshy banks of the Anapo; and as one glides through this graceful forest of paper-rushes, the sight is most enchanting.

According to Pliny, besides its use in the manufacture of paper, the papyrus roots were used for fuel and domestic purposes; the stalks were twisted into boats; the bark into sails,

mats and ropes; the juice was used as a decoction and as a drug for ulcers; and the farina of its flowers produced a fine gluten. The paper was made by cutting the stems into thin slices, arranging them in parallel layers, and submitting them to pressure; the glutinous quality of the plant caused the layers to adhere and the sheet was thus formed.

The Anapo was worshipped by the ancients under the symbolism of a young man who was regarded as the husband of the nymph Cyane, the fountain which is the chief source of the stream. On the south side of the Anapo there are a few remains of the temple of Zeus Olympius. Dionysius is reported to have stolen from this temple the mantle of gold which covered the image of the god. He replaced it with one of woollen cloth on the pretext that the original mantle was too warm for summer and too cold for winter. This spot was the point so often occupied by the invading Carthagenians, and it was likewise the point of approach of the Romans under Marcellus. In the sixth century before Christ many of the noble-landowners of Syracuse had villas here.

Syracuse was the chief seat of learning during the five hundred years that it was the nom-

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inal Greek capital of Sicily, and a long list of men of letters, science and philosophy were natives of the city. Archimedes (287-212 B. C.), a kinsman of King Hieron, was probably the greatest mathematician and physicist of antiquity. He ascertained the ratio of the radius to the circumference and the hydrostatic law that a body dipped in water loses as much weight as the water displaced by it. He invented the pulley and the kind of pump known as "the screw of Archimedes," besides being the author of a number of important scientific books. The Syracusans have recently erected a monument in his honour in the little park near the fountain of Arethusa. The marble statue of Archimedes is by the sculptor Villa. Theocritus and other distinguished Greeks, already referred to in the chapters on Sicilian literature and art, were also natives of Syracuse.

## CHAPTER XX

### GIRGENTI: ITS TYRANTS AND TEMPLES

Size and wealth of the ancient city — Freeman's view — Plato's account — Its foundation by the Dorians — Phalaris the first tyrant — His brazen bull — City plundered by Carthage under the tyranny of Theron — Conquest of Himera — The cost of the victory — The temple of Concord — Temple of Hercules — Temple of Zeus — Temple of Castor and Pollux — Temple of Juno Lacinia — Tomb of Theron — The cathedral — Empedocles.

GIRGENTI, the Akragas of the Greeks and the Agrigentum of the Romans, was the second city of Sicily in point of population and the first in point of wealth during the Hellenic period, although it never equalled Syracuse in historic significance. Pindar called it the fairest of mortal cities; and its superb location certainly warrants the tribute. It was situated on the pedestal of a great rock a thousand feet above sea-level, and protected on three sides by vertical precipices. "The site of Akragas, lofty Akragas, spreading its walls far and wide, is one of the stateliest on which any city was ever planted."

The English historian Freeman says of the



**GIRGENTI, THE ANCIENT AKRAGAS.**

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situation: "Akragas arose on the top of a high hill, with the sea in full sight, and with hill and city sloping down towards it. But the sea nowhere came near to its walls, and no haven brought ships close up to the city itself. Akragas had its haven at no great distance; but it was quite apart from the city, and it was small compared with the havens of Syracuse and Zankle. In truth Akragas never grew to any importance as a seafaring power. She grew rich by an easy trade with the opposite coast of Africa."<sup>1</sup>

Plato when he visited the city was so struck with the wealth and luxury that he remarked that the inhabitants built as if they never expected to die and they feasted as if they had only an hour to live. On one occasion the chief men of the city became so tipsy at a banquet that from reeling and tumbling upon one another they thought themselves at sea in a great storm; and, to lighten the ship, they began to throw the costly furniture out of the window. It had an unenviable reputation during the Greek period for intemperance in the matter of eating and drinking.

<sup>1</sup> Edward A. Freeman: *The History of Sicily from the Earliest Times*. Oxford, 1891.



But it also had a wide reputation for hospitality. Many of the nobles are said to have had servants stationed at the gates of the city to invite the strangers to their houses. It is doubtless to this custom that Empedocles refers when he says that even the gates of the city proclaimed a welcome to the stranger at Akragas.

Akragas was founded by a Doric colony from Gela in the year 579 B. C. A Sikan settlement occupied the spot, but the aborigines were easily driven out and the prosperity of the new city was soon greater than that of any other Greek settlement on the island. Indeed it had been established only a hundred and seventy-five years when it was destroyed by the Carthaginians, thus making it a younger city than New York is to-day. Its rapid growth in so short a period of time to eight hundred thousand inhabitants, if the ancient statements are to be trusted, must have made it seem to the people of old Greece much as Chicago appears to the people of old England.

Phalaris (570-564 B. C.) was the first tyrant, and he obtained a proverbial celebrity as the most cruel and inhumane ruler of antiquity. He had been raised to office by his fellow-citizens, and when once in power he assumed des-

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potie authority. He greatly extended the dominion of Akragas at the expense of the other Greek communities. He is reputed to have erected a huge brazen bull in which he burned alive the victims of his cruelty. Pindar referring to the proverbial reputation of the tyrant for cruelty says :

“Phalaris, with blood defiled,  
His brazen bull, his torturing flame,  
Hand o'er alike to evil fame  
In every clime.”

The tyrant was finally deposed and tradition says he was burned in his brazen bull. His rule was followed by an oligarchy. Theron (488-472 B. C.) was the next tyrant. Although he belonged to one of the noble families, he is said to have got for himself or his son the contract of building a temple and to have used the money in hiring men as a body-guard, and thus made himself tyrant. He conquered Himera and annexed it to Akragas. He was in close alliance with Gelon of Syracuse, to whom he gave his daughter in marriage. In the great battle at Himera, when the Carthaginian forces under Hamilcar attempted the conquest of the Greek

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colonies in Sicily, Theron was aided in the repulse of the barbarians by his son-in-law. The victory at Himera, it will be recalled, is supposed to have occurred on the same day as that at Salamis. "The elder Hellas against the elder Canaan" — that was the cause that was judged on that memorable day of the year 480 B. C.

But Akragas paid dearly for the victory at Himera seventy-five years later. Hamilcon came to avenge the memory of his grandfather. The city was plundered and thousands of the people were massacred and sold in slavery. It never regained its former greatness after this disaster; and after it passed into the hands of the Romans, it ceased altogether to be a place of much consequence. Under the Saracens it was largely peopled by Berbers and ranked next to Palermo in importance and prosperity.

To-day Girgenti is a meanly built city of twenty-two thousand inhabitants with nothing but poverty and crime and the neighbouring Greek temples to distinguish it. But the location of the modern town is superb. Mr. Symonds says of his approach to the city: "Girgenti, far off and far up, gazing seaward, and



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rearing her topaz-coloured bastions into that gorgeous twilight, shone like the aerial vision of cities seen in dreams or imaged in the clouds. Hard and sharp against the sallow line of sunset leaned grotesque shapes of cactuses like hydras, and delicate silhouettes of young olive trees like sylphs; the river ran silver in the hollow, and the mountainside on which the town is piled was solid gold. Then came the dirty dull interior of Girgenti, misnamed the magnificent."

But the ruins of the Greek temples at Girgenti are the most majestic in the ancient Hellenic world. The glorious Doric temple of Concord is the best preserved on the island. This may have been because it was used during the mediæval period as a Christian church. It is built of yellow sandstone full of shells, with six columns in each portico and thirteen at the sides. A statue of Esculapius, now in the museum, was found in the temple. With the exception of the roof the building is practically entire, and it stands in lonely beauty silent and forsaken. It is probably the most harmonious specimen of Doric architecture in existence. While it does not have the majestic grandeur of the larger temples at Paestum, still, as

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Goethe remarks in this connection, it is never wise to compare a god with a giant.

Near the temple of Concord are a large number of interesting tombs, some of them belonging to the Greek and Roman periods and some of them to the early Christian. It was the custom in the ancient times not only to erect tombs in memory of distinguished citizens, but also to horses which had won prizes at the games and even to favourite birds. But the tombs and the ruins of the temples are overgrown with wild palm, aloes, asphodels, snap-dragons, gladiolus, pimpernel, and blossoming sage. The spot is to-day less radiant but more touching than when "processions of men and maidens bearing urns and laurel-branches, crowned with ivy or with myrtle, paced along those sandstone roads, chanting pæans and prosodial hymns, towards the glistening porches and hypæthral cells."

The temple of Hercules, now a mass of shapeless ruins, was the largest house of worship in the ancient city. It was more than twice the size of the temple of Concord or that of Juno Lacinia, although it was not in as fine a style of architecture as the two smaller sanctuaries. After its colossal size its most noteworthy fea-

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ture was the sculpture of the pediments — one representing the capture of Troy and the other the war of the Giants. Diodorus is authority for the statement that the money for the construction of this temple was obtained from the sale of olive-oil to the Carthagenians. Its style of architecture resembled that of the Parthenon, but of the forty-two colossal pillars, only one is now standing.

Cicero gives an excellent account of the temple and of the attempts of Verres to steal its famous statue. He says: "There is in Agrigentum, not far from the forum, a temple of Hercules, which is looked upon by the citizens as exceedingly sacred and holy. It contains a bronze statue (than which I cannot say I have ever seen anything more beautiful), so much revered that its mouth and chin are worn away, because in their prayers and thanksgivings the people are accustomed not only to worship but to kiss it. Upon this temple, while Verres was at Agrigentum, a band of armed slaves, under command of Timarchides, made a sudden assault. An alarm was given by the watchmen and guards, who, after attempting to resist and defend the shrine, were driven back badly wounded with clubs and sticks. After this, hav-



ing burst the bolts and broken open the doors, the slaves endeavoured to weaken the statue with levers and pull it down. Meantime, from the noise, a report spread through the whole city that the gods of the country were being attacked, not by the unexpected arrival of enemies, nor by the sudden attack of robbers, but by a band of armed and disciplined slaves from the house and attendants of the prætor himself."

The temple of Zeus, described by Diodorus as having been one hundred and twenty feet high exclusive of the basement, is now a confused mass of fragments. Down to 1401 considerable parts of the temple were still standing, including several of the original thirty-eight colossal Telamones; but the material was later taken for the construction of the mole. One of the gigantic Telamones has been reconstructed. It is in thirteen segments and measures twenty-five feet in length. Gregorovius says of it: "The gigantic head, which storm and overthrow had rendered shapeless, shows traces — Phrygian fashion — of a berretta upon its curly hair. The arms are raised, as if to support a weight, as is the way with Caryatides. The figure, nearly thirty palms long,

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is in the severe style of Egypt. It runs down to a point at the feet placed close together. It reminds one throughout of the huge statues of Memphis and Thebes. And here, stretched out, this brown and weird giant form appears like the god himself who has laid himself down in the midst of the ruin of his temple for a sleep of centuries, neither to be wakened by the earthquake and strife of elements nor by any sound from the history of a little human race."

The temple of Castor and Pollux, "backed by delicate rose-coloured mountains and surrounded by old olive and almond trees," is another picturesque ruin. It had originally six columns in each front and thirteen at the sides, but only four are now standing, and these have been re-erected. The others lie prostrate amongst the palmetto and the smilax, the asphodels and the iris. The columns show traces of stucco which undoubtedly served as a background for colouring. The white stucco was wrought to the smoothness of marble and was painted over with blue and red and green decorations proper to the Doric style. This fact, which may be noted in other temples in Sicily, disposes of the claim of many art-critics that the Greeks never practised deception in their

arts. Mr. Symonds remarks in this connection: "The whole effect of the colonnades at Selinus and Girgenti must have been an illusion, and their surface must have needed no less constant reparation than the exterior of a Gothic cathedral. The sham jewelry frequently found in Greek tombs, and the curious mixture of marble and sandstone in the sculptures from Selinus, are other instances that the Greeks no less than modern artists condescended to trickery for the sake of effect."

The temple of Juno Lacinia, really a temple of Athene, is after the temple of Concord, the best preserved Greek sanctuary at Girgenti. Of the original thirty-four columns, twenty-five are still standing and nine half-columns have been re-erected. The columns represent the best period of the Doric style; they have twenty flutings, and their height is five times their diameter. On a terrace adjoining the temple stood an altar for use on great festivals when the concourse of worshippers was too great for the temple to hold. Tradition states that it was for this temple that Zeuxis painted his famous picture of the goddess from five of the most beautiful girls of Akragas who were selected for him as models. But the destructive

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forces of man, earthquake, and sirocco have laid waste the temples of Æsculapius, Ceres, Vulcan, and the other houses of the gods at Girgenti; and only the shepherd lad, "in a peaked hat and sheepskin coat, with coins in his ears after the old Greek fashion, playing on his reed pipe, whilst watching his goats and preparing a 'calazione' of acanthus leaves," enables the spectator to bring up visions of the Akragas which Pindar and other writers have so extolled.

The reputed tomb of Theron is another historic monument at Girgenti. According to Diodorus the tyrant's tomb was spared from the destruction of Hannibal by a thunderbolt. The church of St. Nicola, built in Norman times from materials taken from the ancient temples, has been much restored; but the little courtyard behind the high altar has some interesting bits of rude painting on the frieze below the cornice. Near-by is the Oratory of Phalaris, a curious Roman temple that was turned into a chapel in Norman times and is now used as a summer house. The Santa Maria dei Greci, the oldest church in Girgenti and still used for the Greek rites, was built on the ancient temple of Athene.

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The cathedral is a fourteenth century baroque structure without much distinction or character. It contains, however, some highly interesting ancient relics, including a beautiful marble sarcophagus with carvings which relate the story of Hippolytus and Phædra, some interesting Greek vases, and a letter in the archives reputed to have been written by the Devil! According to church legends St. Liberto was the first bishop sent by St. Peter to Sicily and for many years the bishopric of Girgenti was the first on the island.

Empedocles (490-430 B. C.) was the most distinguished man of letters produced by Girgenti during her days of greatness. He assisted in driving the son of Theron from the city and then refused for himself the office of tyrant. He was a man of great scientific learning, having occult power over malaria, winds, and storms; and but for the fact that he was born five hundred years too early, he would undoubtedly be the patron saint of Girgenti to-day. His great epic poem on the universe represents four unchangeable elements — fire, air, water, and earth — with two opposing forces — love and hate. He was likewise an

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engineer and philosopher, and probably spent his closing years on the summit of Mount *Ætna*. He is reputed to have lost his life in the crater of the volcano.

## CHAPTER XXI

### DEAD CITIES OF SICILY

Megara-Hyblæa — Leontini — Gela the final resting place of Aeschylus — The ancient Camarina — Selinunte and its temples — Enna the navel of Sicily — Marsala the ancient Lilybæum — Trapani and Eryx — Segesta — Its theatre and temple — Cefalù and its monuments — The ancient Mylæ — Termini and Himera — Tyndaris and its relics.

It remains to notice a few of the places in Sicily which played important rôles in ancient times but which have now lost all but their historic significance. The fate of Naxos, the first Greek city on the island, has already been related. Its inhabitants were removed to Taormina and the ancient site is to-day occupied by a lemon-orchard. Megara-Hyblæa, after Naxos, Syracuse, and Catania, the oldest Greek city in Sicily, was founded by colonists from Megara in Greece in 726 B. C. Gelon of Syracuse destroyed it in 483. Megara was the home of the comic poet Epicharmus, and it was renowned for its honey and its sweet herbs. The coins of Megara represent the head of a young

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river-god and the forepart of a man-headed bull. Augusta, on the bay, a salt-town of seventeen thousand inhabitants, and Melilli, a village on the hill, visited by vast concourses of people during the first days of May to offer thanks to Saint Sebastian for his numerous miraculous cures, occupy the site of the ancient Megarean city.

Leontini, not far from Megara, was founded by colonists from Naxos under Theocles in 729 B. C. It was first an oligarchy, then a democracy, and then it fell into the hands of a local tyrant from whom it was afterwards captured by the tyrant of Gela. It subsequently regained its independence but later became a provincial city of Syracuse. It was captured by Marcellus in 214 B. C. but was a town of little consequence during the Roman period. It attained some importance during the Saracen period, but both the town and the castle were destroyed by the earthquake of 1693. Its most distinguished citizen was the orator Gorgias, who was the tutor of Alcibiades. The present town is called Lentini and has a population of seventeen thousand inhabitants. Near-by is the Lago di Lentini, the largest lake in Sicily, whose waters exhale poisonous gases.



Gela, which was the final resting place of *Æschylus*, the great Greek dramatist, was founded by a joint colony of Cretans and Rhodians in 690 B. C. It soon became one of the first cities of Sicily, founding Akragas and subjecting other Greek colonies to its dominion; but it was captured and destroyed by the Carthagenians under Hamilcar, and the celebrated statue of Apollo was sent to Tyre, where it was afterwards found by Alexander the Great. It was subsequently recolonized by Timoleon, and was again destroyed by Agathocles, who massacred four thousand of the citizens. Among the existing historic relics are the remains of the temple of Apollo, some interesting sarcophagi at the ancient necropolis, and Virgil's Campi Geloi, the largest plain in Sicily after Catania. The modern Terranova occupies the site of ancient Gela. It has a population of twenty-two thousand and an active trade in grain, oil, and fruit.

Southeast of Terranova is Vittoria, near which is the site of the ancient city of Camarina, founded by Syracuse in 599 B. C. For attempting to gain independence it was destroyed by the ancient city but rebuilt by Hippocrates. It suffered greatly during the Carthagenian

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wars and was sacked by the Mamertines. Some of its coins represent the horned head of the river-god Hipparis on one side and a galloping four-horse chariot on the other, and others the nymph Camarina on the back of a swan with the wind inflating her veil and the fish leaping about her. Not far away is Cómiso, with its famous fountain of Diana, the waters of which, according to ancient writers, refused to mingle with wine when drawn by women of impure character.

Selinunte, the Selinus of the Greeks, contains the ruins of some of the finest temples in Sicily. It was founded by Megara-Hyblæa in 628 B. C. and was long the westernmost Hellenic colony on the island. Thucydides says of its foundation: "The Megareans, after inhabiting it two hundred and forty-five years, were expelled from their city and country by Gelo, tyrant of Syracuse. Before their expulsion, however, a hundred years after their settlement, they founded Selinus, having sent Pampillus for the purpose, who came from Megara, their mother city, and joined them in founding it. The great Athenian armament, which perished in Sicily, was sent against Selinus."

The ruin of the seven magnificent temples

was probably wrought by earthquakes and not as some have thought by the Carthaginian army under Hannibal, who finally destroyed the city. Mr. Freeman says: "Alongside of her stirring memories, Selinus further calls up that wonderful series of monuments which crown her hills, more wonderful in their overthrow, lying as heaps amid utter solitude, than they could have been when they rose in their glory as the ornaments of a strong and well-peopled city. But the temples of Selinus, so precious in the history of Greek art, so overwhelming in their actual presence — most wonderful of all when we see the mighty drums still, as it were, in hewing out of the solid rocks of their native quarry — belong, with one or two exceptions, to a time of her history far nearer to her overthrow than to her birth. The walls too which gird her acropolis belong, in by far the greater part of their extent, to a reconstruction later than the overthrow."<sup>1</sup>

Reference has already been made to Enna, the present mountain town of Castrogiovanni, termed "*Inexpugnabilis*" by Livy. It has a magnificent situation on the summit that rises

<sup>1</sup> Edward A. Freeman: History of Sicily from the Earliest Times. Oxford, 1891.



RUINS OF GREEK TEMPLE AT SELINUS.

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from the plateau to an elevation of 2,605 feet. It was long one of the chief interior towns of the Sikels and it played a conspicuous part in the contests between the Greeks and Carthaginians. It was consecrated to the worship of Ceres and Libera, the oldest known religion in Sicily. Cicero remarks in this connection: "Not only did all the nations think so, but the Sicilians themselves were so convinced of it that it appeared a deeply rooted and innate belief in their minds. For they believed that these goddesses were born in these districts, and that wheat was first discovered in this land, and that Libera was carried off, the same goddess whom they call Proserpine, from a grove in the territory of Enna, a place which, because it is situated in the centre of the island, is called the navel of Sicily. . . . Enna is on a high and lofty mountain, on the top of which is a large level plain, and springs of water which are never dry. And the whole of the plain is cut off and separated, so as to be difficult of approach. Around it are many lakes and groves and beautiful flowers at every season of the year, so that the place itself seems to testify to that abduction of the virgin which we have heard of from our boyhood."

There are no remains on the site of the ancient temple of Ceres. There is an image of the goddess holding Proserpine in the museum at Castrogiovanni. This was long worshipped by the Roman Catholics as the Virgin and her Child; and it was used by the early Italian sculptors after the introduction of the worship of the Madonna as the pose for the Virgin. As Proserpine was called the Saviour by the ancient Greeks and had a resurrection, many writers have thought that the incident gave rise to the worship of the Virgin Mary. The statue is reputed to have been the work of a pupil of Praxiteles. The poverty-stricken church of San Spirito claims to have the original crown of thorns worn by Jesus at the time of the crucifixion.

Marsala, the Lilybæum of the ancients and " God's Haven " of the Arabs, is to-day a prosperous business city with fifty-eight thousand inhabitants, and the centre of the sherry wine industry in Sicily. It was originally a Phœnician trading post and was later fortified by the Carthagenians. During the first Punic War it withstood a ten-years' siege. During the Roman period Cicero was for a period its quæstor. It contains a few relics and ancient

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monuments which date back to the Phœnician period. In a field near-by is the Grotta della Sibilla, the spring where the Cumæan Sibyl is said to have proclaimed her oracles through the medium of water. The spring is still an object of superstitious veneration by the ignorant Sicilians. Marsala was the place where Garibaldi with his thousand men in red shirts began the successful conquest of the island from the Bourbons in 1860.

The sea-water on the western coast of Sicily is remarkably saline, and there are forty-five salt works between Marsala and Trapani. The water is pumped into ditches; it evaporates during the summer months, and the crude salt is ground by means of wind-mills. The annual export exceeds 200,000 tons. Norway, Sweden, Canada, and the United States are the chief markets for the salt of western Sicily.

Trapani, the Eryx of the ancients, was also a stronghold of the Phœnicians and Carthaginians. It is the place where Virgil lands Æneas and has him found a city and erect a temple and a tomb in memory of his father. Like Lilybæum, it was long a stronghold of the Carthaginians, although its foundation was doubtless by the Phœnicians, who erected on



the neighbouring mountain a temple to Astarte. The Greeks believed that the temple was founded by Hercules, and they represented Eryx on the coins by the head of Aphrodite and Hercules leaning on a club. Trapani is to-day a prosperous seaport with a population of thirty-eight thousand. It has a good harbour, which is the fourth shipping port of Sicily. Besides its ship-building and salt-works, it has numerous manufactures of marble, alabaster, coral, cameos, and mother-of-pearl.

In another connection in this book mention has been made of the Doric temple at Segesta as being one of the finest existing Greek sanctuaries in Sicily. It was one of the earliest cities on the island founded by the Phœnicians, but it passed into the hands of the Greeks about 580 B. C. It became one of the first cities of the island and took an active part in the internecine wars of the Hellenic colonies. A dispute between Segesta and Selinus was the original cause of the Athenian expedition against Syracuse. The two cities quarrelled over the boundary between their respective city-states, and Syracuse took the side of Selinus. Segesta appealed to Athens for aid, but the latter, wishing to know something of the Segestan ex-

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chequer, sent a mission to the aggrieved city to make the financial investigation.

The deception which the Segestans practised by means of borrowed riches has been so well told by Thucydides that I give his words: "The Segestans had recourse to the following contrivance at the time when the first envoys of the Athenians came to see the state of their funds. They took them to the temple of Venus at Eryx, and showed them the treasure deposited there, consisting of bowls, wine-ladles, censers, and other articles of furniture in no small quantity, which being made of silver, presented, with a value really trifling, a much greater show of wealth; and in their private receptions of the triremes' crews, having collected the cups both of silver and gold, that were in Segesta itself, and borrowed those of the neighbouring cities, whether Phœnician or Grecian, they brought them to the entertainments as their own. And thus, as all used pretty nearly the same, and great numbers of them were everywhere seen, it created much astonishment in the Athenians from the triremes; and on their arrival at Athens they spread it abroad that they had seen great wealth."

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Besides the temple there are the remains of a Greco-Roman theatre at Segesta that is one of the most important relics of its kind in Sicily. The theatre is hewn from the solid rock and has a diameter of two hundred and five feet. It has twenty rows of seats in seven sections, and the rear rows were furnished with backs. It may not have been completed at the time of the destruction of the city by Agathocles and the cruel massacre of ten thousand citizens. At any rate it shows marked evidence of Roman alterations, and in front of the proscenium the remains of two figures of Roman satyrs are visible.

As noted elsewhere, the temple was never completed. Mr. Freeman remarks in this connection: "The still abiding remains of Segesta are among the most striking remains of antiquity, and they have a character of their own in which no other monuments have a share. But they tell us less of the city itself than the remains of many other ancient towns, whether destroyed or still existing. At Segesta there is nothing that can be called ruins. No solitary columns stand, as at Nemea and Corinth and by the Syracusan harbour, as surviving witnesses of great buildings which have fallen.

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There is no group of buildings standing, as at Poseidonia, or ruined as at Selinus, to make us feel we are looking on the remains of a great city. The temple of Segesta stands by itself; as far as there is anything about the temple itself to tell us, it might have been meant to stand by itself on its hill, like a Cistercian abbey in its dale. It has indeed a fellow, a second witness of the great days of Segesta; but while the temple on its lower hill is seen from away, the theatre on its loftier hill is barely seen from the foot of its own height."

Solunto was first a Phœnician trading post and later a Carthagenian town. Most of its ruins, however, date from the Roman period. It lies at the foot of Monte Catalfano, under the débris of which the town was buried until the beginning of the last century. Only the foundations of the houses and fragments of the walls remain. The latter have traces of mural paintings like those at Pompeii. There is a temple-like building whose columns have been re-erected that was probably the gymnasium of the town. Most of the art-treasures found at Solunto — including the statue of Jupiter and the archaic figure of Isis — are now in the museum at Palermo. The city is supposed to

have been founded by King Hiram of Tyre. Its most distinguished son was Aristoxenos, of whom Epicharmus has left us a eulogy.

Cefalù on the northern coast of Sicily was first settled by the Sikans; later occupied by the Sikels; and during the period of Phœnician supremacy it was an important mart. Its settlement by the Greeks dates from the year 648 B. C., when Zankle planted a colony here. It is located at the base of a rocky headland that juts into the sea. A building still stands on the slope of the hill the walls of which show the methods of building peculiar to the primeval Sikels.

The town is dominated by a castello which dates from the Saracenic period. The battlemented-wall that encircles the huge rock, however, dates from several periods, and the oldest portions may go back to the time of the Phœnicians. The so-called temple of Diana probably belongs to the later Roman period and the cistern of the same name to the Saracenic period. On the summit there are the remains of a Norman castle that commands one of the finest views in Sicily.

The Norman cathedral at Cefalù, elsewhere described, is one of the two finest buildings of



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its period in Sicily; and the superb mosaic of the colossal half-length figure of Christ is a better piece of work than its counterpart at Monreale. The figure of Mary with four archangels and those of the prophets and the saints is thought to have been the work of Greek artists. Cefalù is to-day a town of thirteen thousand inhabitants, thrifty and dirty, and literally infested with beggars.

Milazzo, the ancient Mylæ, was a colony founded by Zankle in 716 B. C. It is identified as the spot where Ulysses killed the cattle of Apollo. Some of the greatest battles of Sicilian history were fought in the neighbourhood of Mylæ. Here Hieron II won a great battle over the Mamertines; in the bay of Mylæ the Romans gained their first great naval victory over the Carthagenians; here Sextus Pompeius was defeated by Augustus; here the Christian forces suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Moslems at the time of the Saracenic invasion, and here Garibaldi forced the final surrender of General Bosco and the Bourbon forces. Louis Philippe lived here several years in exile as the Duke of Orleans.

Termini, the Himera of the Greeks, is another ancient city on the northern coast. It



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was founded by the people of Zankle in the year 648 B. C. and rose to the rank of a city-state of the first class. It was the birthplace of the Doric poet Stesichorus, and here were fought several of the greatest battles between the Greeks and the Carthagenians. Hannibal wrought the vengeance which he had vowed to the memory of his grandfather, and razed the town to the ground, killing the inhabitants or selling them in slavery. The present town of Termini has twenty-one thousand inhabitants, but there are only a few monuments that date back to the Greek period. These are kept in the Ospedale dei Benfratelli. Since the days of Pindar Himera has been celebrated for its warm saline springs.

Tyndaris, one of the last of the Greek colonies in Sicily, was founded by Dionysius I in 396 B. C. It occupied the site of an ancient Sikan town that had become hellenized by trade with Zankle and with the other previously established Greek cities. It became allied with Timoleon, and during the Punic wars it cast its lot with Rome. Under the latter it attained greater prosperity than most of the Sicilian towns. It was once the seat of a bishopric and it played a relative-important rôle during the

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early Christian period. But barring a few relics of its ancient monuments — remnants of a Greek theatre, a building with columns and round arches believed to have been a gymnasium, and parts of the old wall — Tyndaris is a very dead city to-day, and the date of its final destruction is not known.

Readers of Cicero will recall that Tyndaris was one of the cities that suffered most at the hands of Verres. Among the art-treasures which the vandal-prætor carried off was a much-prized statue of Hermes which had once before been carried off by the Carthagenians and restored by Scipio Africanus. In his oration against Verres Cicero says: “ You have heard, O judges, the deputies from Tyndaris, most honourable men, and the chief men of the city, say that the Mercury, which in their sacred anniversaries was worshipped among them with the extremest religious reverence . . . had been taken away by the violence and wickedness and arbitrary power of this man.”

One of the notable but more recent relics at Tyndaris is the Madonna del Tyndaro, which stands on the top of a precipice six hundred feet above the sea, with a superb view of the Æolian islands, the active volcano of Strom-

boli, and the sickle-shaped harbour of Milazzo. The church occupies the ancient Acropolis and the site of a Greek temple. It contains a black image of the Virgin which is an object of adoration of Roman Catholic pilgrims from Sicily and Italy.

**THE END.**

## APPENDIXES

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### I. SUGGESTIONS FOR TRAVELLERS

THE chapter on hostelries gives most of the information that a general work of this kind could be expected to furnish. Guide-books and friends must be relied upon for details.

As to guide-books that of Baedeker — Southern Italy and Sicily — is by all means the best, but the traveller should be careful to secure the latest edition, as hôtels and their tariffs are subject to frequent fluctuations.

Two other guide-books of considerable historic value are those by Jackson and Hare, referred to in the bibliography. Douglas Sladen's *Sicily the New Winter Resort* is a veritable encyclopædia on all Sicilian matters and the traveller should carry it with him if possible.

In the bibliography that follows there is a list of some of the most important books on Sicily with brief critical annotations. In a

country like Sicily, where so much of the delight of travel depends upon literary and historical associations, the traveller can not be too strongly urged to steep himself in advance in the rich classical literature of the island.

Winter is undoubtedly the best time of the year to make the tour of the island, although I have talked with travellers who have been there in summer and they report that they did not find the temperature unduly warm. I feel sure, however, that one would find the sanitary arrangements of the Sicilian *hôtels* less tolerable in summer than in winter.

Neither walking nor cycling tours in Sicily are feasible, at least in the interior of the island. The roads are not good; towns are far apart, and one is not altogether safe from the attacks of brigands. For the same reasons automobile tours are not very feasible.

The island is reasonably well supplied with railway lines, and the service, while slow, is not bad. Return tickets (*Biglietti di andata-ritorno*) for distances up to sixty-two miles are valid for one day only, with an increase in time up to nine days with the increase of distance covered. Circular tickets (*Biglietti a itinera-rio combinabile*) over fixed routes and for peri-

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ods ranging from fifteen to sixty days may be purchased at greatly reduced rates. Monthly railway time-tables cost about ten cents.

Sicily may be approached by rail from Naples by way of Reggio and Messina or by boat from Naples to Palermo. The boat service leaves much to be desired, although it is much cheaper than the all-rail trip. Before the recent destruction of Messina there was also a line of steamers between that city and Naples.

However useful travellers may have found the tourist agencies in other countries, they cannot be depended upon in Sicily. Numerous travellers whom I met denounced in the strongest terms the misrepresentations of the tourist bureaus on the island. Travel is by no means difficult in Sicily, and it is better to make one's own arrangements rather than depend upon tourist agents whose word has no value.

The photographs of Sicily are the finest I have found in my travels, and they are not expensive. Those by Crupi, Gloeden, Brogi, Incorpora, and Alinari are generally excellent; and the bookstore of Raber — *Libreria Internazionale* — at Palermo is as good as will be found anywhere in Europe.

## II. SELECT ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY<sup>1</sup>

### (a) AMERICAN AND ENGLISH BOOKS

(1) BAEDERER, KARL. *Southern Italy and Sicily*. Fifteenth revised edition. Leipzig, 1908. The most complete and reliable guide-book in English.

(2) BARTLETT, W. H. *Pictures from Sicily*. London, 1853. An interesting and reliable account of social and political conditions in Sicily during the last days of the Bourbons.

(3) CRAWFORD, F. MARION. *Rulers of the South: Sicily, Calabria, Malta*. New York, 1900. 2 volumes. A thoroughly readable although not very profound historical sketch of Sicily.

(4) ELLIOT, FRANCES. *Diary of an Idle Woman in Sicily*. Leipzig, 1882. A gossipy but rather inconsequential book.

(5) HARE, AUGUSTUS J. C., and BADDERLY, ST. CLAIR. *Sicily*. New York, 1905. A very useful brief historical guide.

(6) JACKSON, F. HAMILTON. *Sicily*. London, 1904. A brief historical guide that covers much the same ground as the book by Hare, but at many points it supplements it admirably.

(7) GOETHE, J. W. *Travels in Italy*. London, 1854. Extremely interesting travel-notes on Sicily a hundred years ago. Goethe believed that Sicily was the key to Italy. "Italy without Sicily," he said, "leaves no image on the soul."

(8) KNIGHT, HENRY GALLEY. *The Normans in Sicily*. London, 1888. A brief historical sketch of the Norman period.

(9) FREEMAN, EDWARD A. *Story of Sicily: Phœnician, Greek, and Roman*. New York, 1892. The only brief and reliable

<sup>1</sup> This bibliography does not lay claim to completeness.

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history of Sicily in English. It does not, unfortunately, cover the mediæval and modern periods. It is one of the "Story of the Nations" series.

(10) FREEMAN, EDWARD A. *History of Sicily from the Earliest Times*. Oxford, 1891. 4 volumes. This is one of the most scholarly historical works in the English language. But the premature death of the author only brings the story down to the death of Agathocles. The four volumes, however, will stand as an abiding monument to the industry and scholarship of the great English historian. I am under large obligations to Freeman for the historical chapters of the present volume.

(11) PATON, WILLIAM AGNEW. *Picturesque Sicily*. New York, 1902. A general book of travel with very readable accounts of most of the places of interest in Sicily.

(12) PERRY, WALTER COPLAND. *Sicily in Fable, History, Art, and Song*. London, 1908. A popular account of Sicily based upon the writings of Herodotus, Thucydides, Diodorus, Cicero, and others. A useful book for the traveller who is not familiar with these classical authors.

(13) SLADEN, DOUGLAS. *In Sicily*. London, 1901. 2 volumes. A comprehensive work, rather journalistic in style and unduly diffuse. But it contains a great quantity of interesting matter not over-well arranged. It has more than three hundred illustrations, which are for the most part excellent.

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(15) SYMONDS, JOHN ADDINGTON. *Renaissance in Italy*. New York, 1888. Tells briefly and in Symonds's delightful style the part played by Sicily in the Italian renaissance.

(16) SYMONDS, JOHN ADDINGTON. *Sketches in Italy and Greece*. London, 1879. Nothing more delightful in the literature of travel than Symonds's charming sketches of Palermo, Syracuse, Girgenti, and Mount Ætna. I have made frequent quotations from the sketches in this volume. These essays may also be had in the Tauchnitz edition under the title *Sketches in Italy*.



(17) TUCKERMAN, H. T. *Sicily: a Pilgrimage*. New York, 1852. Colourless travel-notes of indifferent value.

(18) TWEEDIE, MRS. E. B. *Sunny Sicily: Its Ruins and Its Rustics*. New York, n. d. Rather rambling travel-sketches, with some interesting digressions, and information that might appeal to women readers.

(19) There are some English novels that deal with Sicily, but I am not familiar with their merits. Among such works of fiction may be named Douglas Sladen's *The Admiral*, Norma Lorimer's *Josiah's Wife* and *On Etna*, Selma Laegerof's *Miracles of Anti-Christ*, Justin McCarthy's *Proud Prince*, Henry W. Fuller's *Last Refuge*, and F. Marion Crawford's *Corleone*.

#### (b) CLASSICAL AUTHORS IN ENGLISH

(1) CICERO. *The Two Last Pleadings*. Translated by Charles Kelsell. London, 1812. These are the famous orations of Cicero against Verres. They contain a wealth of material bearing on Sicily. The same may be had in the Bohn library in the collected works of Cicero, volume I.

(2) THEOCRITUS. *Idylls*. Translated by Charles Stuart Calverly. Boston, 1906. The *Idylls* of Theocritus give some delightful bits of pastoral life in Sicily. There is also a translation by Andrew Lang.

(3) THUCYDIDES. *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Translated by Henry Dale. London, 1880. 2 volumes. Classical account of the invasion of Syracuse by the Athenians. A translation of the same by the late Benjamin Jowett. Boston, 1883.

#### (c) GERMAN BOOKS

(1) GREGOROVIVS, FERDINAND. *Siciliana: Wanderungen in Neapl und Sicilien*. Leipzig, 1861. Travel sketches which give an account of the island at the time of the expulsion of the Bourbons.

(2) HOLM, A. *Geschichte Siciliens im Alterthums*. Leipzig, 1898. 3 volumes. This standard historical work in German covers much the same ground as Freeman in English.

(3) KOLDEWEY AND PUCHSTEIN. *Die Griechische Tempel in Unteritalien und Sicilien*. Berlin, 1899. 2 volumes. This is the best work on the archaeology of Sicily known to me. It contains one hundred and sixty-three drawings, plans, and photographs, and twenty-eight plates.

(4) WERMERT, GEORG. *Die Insel Sicilien in volkswirtschaftlicher, kultureller und sozialer Beziehung*. Berlin, 1905. This is not only one of the most recent but also one of the best general books on Sicily. It deals most fully with industrial and social conditions and gives a vast amount of statistical data.

(d) FRENCH BOOKS

(1) BAZIN, RENÉ. *Sicile*. Paris, 1893.

(2) CLAUSSE. *Basiliques et Mosaiques chrétiennes*. Paris, 1895. The second volume deals with the mosaics of Sicily.

(3) COMBES DE LESTRADE, VICOMTE. *La Sicile sous la Monarchie de Savoie*. Paris, 1894. See also numerous essays in French periodicals by the same author on the commerce and industries of Sicily.

(4) DUMAS, ALEXANDRE. *Le Speronare*. Paris, 1842. Delightful bits of travel. There is also an English translation of this work by Katherine P. Wormeley. Boston, 1902.

(5) RENAN, ERNEST. *Vingt Jour in Sicile*. Paris, 1878.

(6) OLIVIER, LOUIS, ET AL. *En Sicile: Guide du Savant et du Touriste*. Paris, n. d. A series of articles on a variety of Sicilian subjects by thirteen well-known French writers and men of science, including Antole Leroy-Beaulieu, Vicomte Combes de Lestrade, Charles Diehl, Georges Yver, and others. The matter is presented in attractive form and there are many excellent illustrations. The book is not dated, but none of the statistical information refers to years since 1900.

(e) ITALIAN BOOKS<sup>1</sup>

(1) AMARI, MICHELE. *Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia*. Turino, 1889. 2 volumes.

<sup>1</sup> See also the foot-notes throughout the book.

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- (2) AVOLIO, C. *Introduzione allo Studio del Dialetto Siciliano*. Noto, 1882.
  - (3) BASILE, MICHELE. *Latifondi e Poderi*. Messina, 1898.
  - (4) BALDACCI, L. *Descrizione Geologica dell' Isola di Sicilia*. Palermo, 1886.
  - (5) BATAGLIA, ARISTIDE. *L'Evoluzione Sociale*. Palermo, 1895.
  - (6) CORSI, CARLO. *Sicilia*. Rome, 1894.
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  - (9) PITRE, LUIGI. *Canti Popolari Siciliani*. Palermo, 1891. 2 volumes.
  - (10) POJERO, LOJACONO. *Flora Sicula*. Palermo, 1889.
  - (11) SALOMONE - MARINO, S. *Storie Popolari in Poesia Siciliana*. Bologna, 1877.
  - (12) VACIRCA, ANTONIO. *Il Problema Agrario in Sicilia*. Palermo, 1903.
  - (13) VILLARI, PASQUALE. *La Sicilia e il Socialismo*. Milan, 1896.

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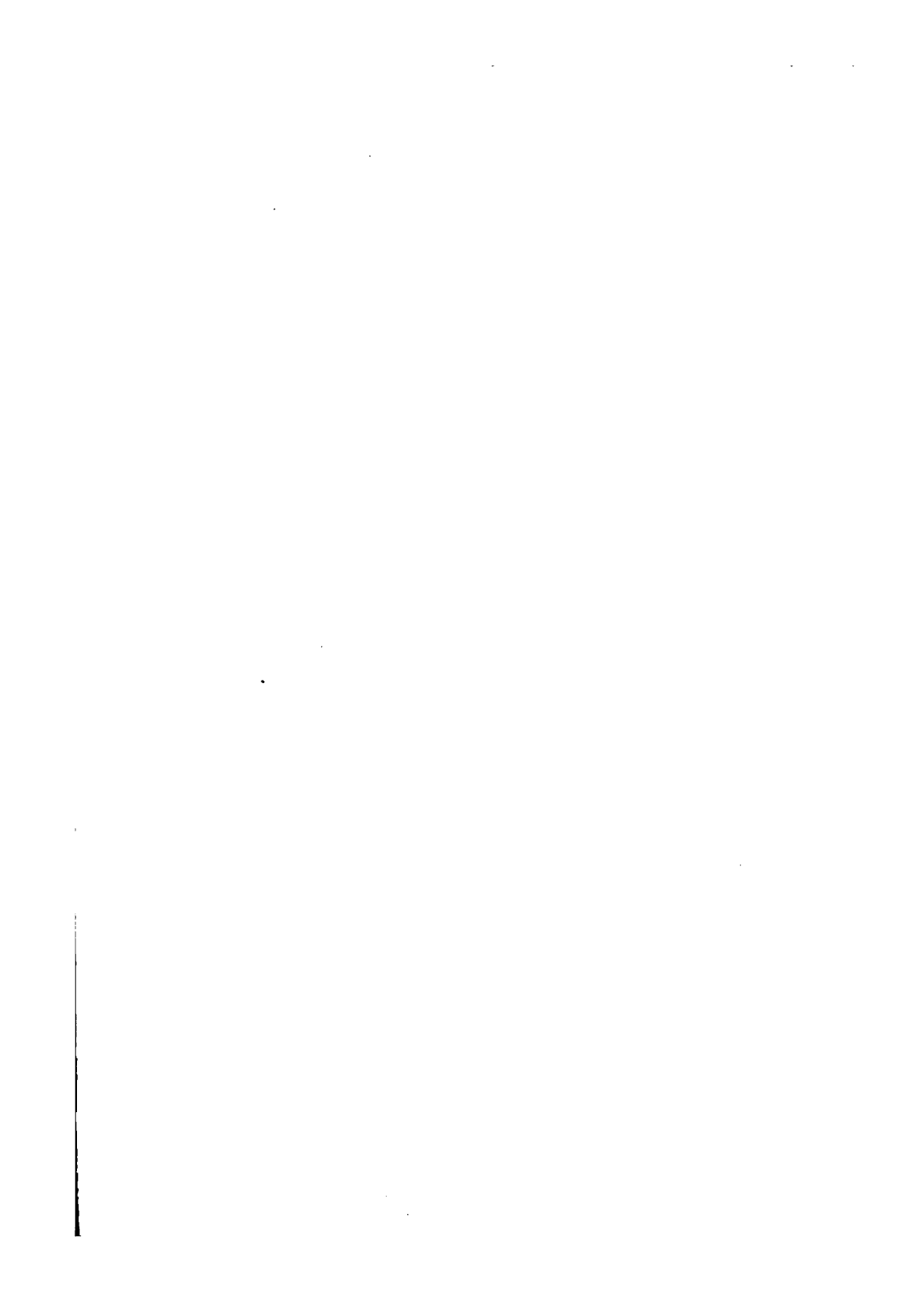
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